

IN THIS ISSUE: FAMILY HISTORY • THROUGH THE LENS • EYEWITNESS



IRELAND'S MILITARY STORY

ISSUE 5/SPRING 2017 RRP: €7.50

DELTA 13 CHARLIE A BLACKHORSE IRISHMAN IN VIETNAM

11th Armored Cavalry
Regiment veteran
Michael Coyne

THE AMERICAN LEGION

THE GUNS OF SPIKE ISLAND

ON A WAR FOOTING PART 2

Ned Cusack continues
his story

RECOLLECTIONS OF ESCAPE, INTERNMENT AND FREEDOM

Interview with Robert MacMillan

REFLECTIONS FROM MY TIME IN VIETNAM

Senior Master Sergeant
Michael Noone, United
States Air Force (Retd)

EMERGENCY OVER IRISH SKIES PART 2

Air Defence Command

GREEN FIELDS TO RICE PADDIES

THE IRISH WHO FOUGHT IN VIETNAM

Interview with Declan Hughes,
Director at Irish Veterans

ISSN 2009-8847



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Image: David Butler

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Editor

Wesley Bourke
editor@irelandsmilitarystory.ie

Photographic Editor

Billy Galligan

Photographer

Ken Mooney
photographer@irelandsmilitarystory.ie

Sub-Editor

Colm Delaney

Subscriptions

subscriptions@irelandsmilitarystory.ie
General enquires: info@irelandsmilitarystory.ie

To advertise with us please contact
advertising@irelandsmilitarystory.ie

Graphic Designer

Rob Lewis
rob@minxdesign.ie

Printer

GPS Colour Graphics Ltd.
Alexander Road
Belfast
BT6 9HP
Northern Ireland
Phone: +44 28 9070 2020

Distribution

Warners Group Publications Plc
West St,
Bourne PE10 9NB,
United Kingdom
Phone: +44 1778 391000

Digital distribution

MagazineCloner.com

Contributors

Michael Coyne
Ned Cusack
Ron Howko
Declan Hughes
AP (Tony) Kearns
Fiona MacMillan
Michael Noone

EDITOR'S NOTE



The theme for this issue dates to the early 2000's. At that time, I was working for An Cosantóir – the Irish Defence Forces magazine. At a ceremony for Irish who had served

in Vietnam I met Declan Hughes. At the time, I was completely unaware of the Irish in Vietnam. Of course, considering the amount of people who had emigrated from Ireland, making a new life in places such as Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada the United States, Australia, or New Zealand, it is inevitable that some would serve in the military of that country.

Declan had begun a search for Irish who had served in Vietnam. Furthermore, he had also begun the search for those Irish who had been killed. At that ceremony I was introduced to Irishmen who had served in the Australian, New Zealand and United States militaries during Vietnam. Veterans such as Michael Coyne and Michael Noone had returned to Ireland after their service. How many never returned home and remained in their adopted countries is unknown. The figure no doubt stretches well into the thousands.

Although Ireland is neutral and not directly involved in such conflicts, we should never forget the indirect involvement. To this day Irish men and women serve with distinction in the militaries of their adopted homes. Back in Ireland, their family and friends pray for their safe return.

Yours in history,
Wesley Bourke

Wesley Bourke

Front cover

Our front cover shows Noel McGillian, from Vietnam's Wild Geese, depicting an American infantry soldier in Vietnam. (Photo by Ken Mooney)

Interested in submitting an article or photographs? Here at Ireland's military story we welcome submissions from our readers. For further information please contact the editor at: editor@irelandsmilitarystory.ie or visit www.irelandsmilitarystory.ie

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Correction

In our Winter issue the Battle of Malplaquet, should have read 1709. Our apologies.

WITH THANKS

We would like to thank the following for their support and help in this issue.

Dept. of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
Fortress Spike Island
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Irish Defence Forces Military Archives
Irish Defence Forces Press Office
Irish Great War Society
Irish Veterans
Justin Horgan

Military Heritage of Ireland Trust
National Museum of Ireland
Renmore Barracks Museum
The American Legion
The Royal British Legion
Vietnam's Wild Geese
Waterford Treasures – Bishops Palace

DISPATCHES

1916 Centenary Commemorative Medal

In acknowledgment to the members of Óglaigh na hÉireann, both Permanent and Reserve, who served during the centenary year of 2016, the Government awarded them the 1916 Centenary Commemorative Medal. The medal highlights the Government's appreciation of the excellent work undertaken by the members of Óglaigh na hÉireann, both at home and overseas, and the commitment to excellence which is a hallmark of the Defence Forces.

At Dublin Castle on December 4th, the 1916 Centenary Commemorative medals were presented to members of the Defence Force personnel by the President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins, the Tánaiste Frances Fitzgerald TD, Minister with Responsibility for Defence Paul Kehoe TD, Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government Simon Coveney, TD, and Minister for Health Simon Harris TD.

(Photo courtesy of Defence Forces Press Office)



Heritage Award for Portumna Workhouse

At a ceremony at RCPI, No.6 Kildare Street on February 22nd, the Irish Workhouse Centre in Portumna were acknowledged for the success of their 2016 Heritage Week programme by winning the national 'Reaching Out' heritage award. Each year the Heritage Council presents four awards under the categories 'Reaching Out', 'Hidden Heritage', 'Heritage Hero', and 'Cool for Kids'; with the East Galway centre recognised for reaching out to new audiences in innovative ways.

Over the nine days of Heritage Week 2016, twelve events were hosted by the centre. However it was efforts to focus on the military history the region and the country which saw the centre triumph. Historian and workhouse manager Steve Dolan gave a lecture on the 343 Soldiers from Portumna who served in the British Army in the nineteenth century and survived to discharge. Much study by the workhouse staff meant that genealogical as well as military questions could be answered in an open forum discussion to recognise the men.

In addition, a lecture given by Aron Donnelly of the Workhouse on the Irish connections to the Franco-Prussian War won special praise by the Council. The number of German and French visitors to the region was considered and, for the previous week, the centre (in their guise as a tourist point)



invited several French and German tourists to the event. There was also considerable effort at publicising the lecture on-line with members of the local community with German or French links also invited to what turned into a huge gathering.

Pictured are Chair of the Heritage Council Michael Parsons, Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Heather Humphreys TD, and the manager of the Portumna Workhouse, Steve Dolan, accepting the award.

The Commandant Peter Young Reading Room

On Friday December 16th, Military Archives held their annual Christmas reception. This year was a special year as the Reading Room was named in honour of the late Commandant Peter Young. It was Commandant Young who, in the early 1980's, recognised the importance of having a dedicated Military Archives to store and preserve Ireland's military records.

The Military Archives has been the official place of deposit for records of the Irish Defence Forces, the Department of Defence and the Army Pensions Board since 1990, as defined in the National Archives Act, 1986. Their brief is to collect material from the foundation of the State up until the present day, including records from overseas missions

(Photo by Ken Mooney)



DISPATCHES

Commemorative Stone Dedicated to the Seven Signatories of the Proclamation

On December 1st, the President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins, unveiled a Commemorative Stone Display dedicated to the Seven Signatories of the Proclamation during a visit to the Military College. Minister with Responsibility for Defence, Mr. Paul Kehoe, TD, and the Defence Forces Chief of Staff, Vice Admiral Mark Mellett DSM were also in attendance.

Mounted on the sandstones are slates with images of the seven signatories of the 1916 Proclamation. Uachtarán na hÉireann Michael D. Higgins unveiled the Commemorative Stone Display in recognition of the Cadet School's participation in Commemorative Events throughout 2016.

(Photo courtesy of Defence Forces Press Office)



Unveiling of Connaught Rangers Plaque

A solemn ceremony took place in the garrison Church, Dún Uí Mhaoilíosa (Renmore Barracks), Galway, where a plaque honouring the Connaught Rangers was unveiled on November 11th, last.

Officer Commanding 1 Cn Cois, Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Campion unveiled the plaque dedicated to the Connaught Rangers who served and died during The Great War. Also present were members of the Connaught Rangers Association, former and serving members of the Defence Forces and family members of former Connaught Rangers.

A brief history of the regiment was outlined by Sergeant P.J. Maloney, Curator of Military Museum, Dún Uí Mhaoilíosa, and after a minute's silence the plaque was blessed by Reverend Robert McCabe.

Renmore Barracks, Galway was formerly the Training Depot, Connaught Rangers from 1881 until 1922 when the Regiment was disbanded. Many items from the Rangers are on display in the Military Museum.



I-r: Mr. Gary Egan, Sergeant P. J. Maloney, Mr. Paul Malpas, Reverend Robert McCabe, Mr. William Beirne.

Old Comrades Reunited

In December 1961, the 36th Infantry Battalion arrived in the Congo and within two days they were involved in the Battle of the Tunnel, in Élisabethville. Each year veterans from the highly decorated A Company hold a commemorative ceremony at the Defence Forces plot in Glasnevin Cemetery.

At this year's ceremony on December 11th, two comrades met for the first time since they returned home from the Congo in 1962. - Robert Cremers, now living in the UK, and Joe Brady (IUNVA Post 1)..

(Photo by Ken Mooney)



Co. Clare Remembers

During World War I, more than 4,000 men from Co. Clare fought in various Allied armies, American, British, French and Commonwealth forces, (Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa), during the years of conflict, 1914-1918. On November 27th, a peace park was opened at the Causeway Link in Ennis, Co. Clare. The park honours and remembers the sacrifice of those Clare men and women who served during World War I and to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice. The park also remembers the civilians who were tragically killed during the war and the families left behind.

(Photos by Clare Peace Park)

Letter to the editor

Dear Sir

I want to bring to your attention an error in the caption on page 14, article: In Defence Of Peace, Winter 2016.

The caption states that the photo was taken at Jadotville. I think this photograph was not taken in Jadotville for the following reasons:

1. The building in the background was Headquarters for the 35th Infantry Battalion, and later the 36th Infantry Battalion, at Leopold Farm, Élisabethville.
2. In this photograph, the armoured cars are painted green. This did not happen until after the ceasefire in September 1961, to make them less conspicuous, which was when the Jadotville action took place. When the cars arrived in the Congo with the 34th Infantry Battalion, they were painted white. I was on a detachment that travelled by air from Élisabethville to Kamina, to bring a couple of cars just arrived in the Congo, to Élisabethville by train. They were painted. This journey of 500 miles took 3 days and nights through mostly jungle. Therefore, the two cars at Jadotville were still white at the time of the engagement.
3. The officer in the photograph may or may not be Quinlan, it is very hard to tell.
4. The helmet the gunner in the armoured car is wearing was worn by the 36th Infantry Battalion members and was not available to members of the 35th.

Yours sincerely

John O'Mahony, Former Trooper, Armoured Car Group, 35th Infantry Battalion





Delta 13 Charlie

A Blackhorse Irishman in Vietnam

Michael Coyne is one of the unknown number of Irish who fought in Vietnam. Working in Chicago during the 1960's, it was only a matter of time before the Vietnam War caught up with him.

I was born in Cornamona, Galway, 1945. When I was seven we moved here to Jenkinstown, Co. Meath, just outside Kilcock. We moved up as part of the Land Commission. All our family, including myself, spoke Irish. When I was 16 my mother was dying and my uncle arranged for me to go to Chicago.

On May 17th, 1962. I landed in New York and met up with my father's family there. I saw all the sights, like the Empire State Building. When I first got to Chicago I got a job with an Italian gardener. For six months, I went around the suburbs cutting shrubs and that kind of thing. My uncle then got

me a job with an Irish-American Furrier by the name of Jerome McCarthy. He gave me a job as an apprentice furrier. I got to do and learn everything about furs. I had a great time going to and helping run the fashion shows in all the big hotels in Chicago. In 1963, I turned 18 and had to sign up for the draft. I got called up for the first time two years later. Jerome McCarthy managed to get me off, based on my job being vital. I've no idea why a furrier was classed as vital. This happened two or three times. You'd get called up, ready yourself for going, and then you'd be told to go home.

However, on October 23rd, 1966, I was

called up again. I went through the medical again and all the other paperwork. They told me "it's ok go home". I was on edge and apprehensive and I said 'no, I want to go'. I was fed up with it. That was it. Off I was sent to Fort Campbell in Kentucky. My boss did not take well to me leaving him.

Fort Campbell was our introduction to the military. Here you got your hair cut, issued uniform, and learned the ideology of the U.S. Army. Then it was down to Fort Stuart in Georgia for basic training. This was another 6 – 8 weeks, I can't fully remember. We arrived on a bus, the Drill Sergeants were there to meet us "Out Out

A photo of the flight section of the 11th Cavalry supporting G Troop, on operations in Hau Nghia Province northwest of Phu Loi in early 1972. (Image: Doug Kibbey, 11th Cavalry, www.museum.vhpa.org/11thcav)



Michael Coyne in Vietnam.



M113's of 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment on patrol. (Image: Doug Kibbey)

Out!" they shouted. You had to be quick. Fort Campbell had taught us that much. In to our billets, then 05:00 the next morning "Up Up Up!"

The training is the same the world over. The training didn't bother me. I got on with it. I was skinny and fit. I spent my time helping the poor devils who were breaking down crying. After basic we were sent to Advanced Training School. Every now and then volunteers were asked for. One day an instructor came in and said "We need two volunteers". Two of us put up our hands. "You! you're going to Air Traffic Control. You! Coyne, are going to Film Projection School". I had no idea what that was. Myself and the other guy thought to ourselves 'great we got nice cushy numbers'. I've no idea

They told me "it's ok go home". I was on edge and apprehensive and I said 'no, I want to go'. I was fed up with it. That was it. Off I was sent to Fort Campbell in Kentucky.

what happened to him afterwards.

Another three-week course; this time learning all about recording and editing film. I did a test and passed it. The unit made all sorts of films on things like training videos. A lot of the guys in the unit had served in

Vietnam and there was a lot of talk about their tours. They had been over there with the Film Projection Unit. They all said it was a piece of cake. So, I said I'll volunteer for that.

I went down to the Administration Sergeant. He said no problem and did up the paperwork. The next day he called me back. "You are not a U.S. citizen. Goddamn! I am going to have to send all kinds of paperwork up to Washington to get security clearance for you". That was all sorted and in April 1967, I flew from Tacoma, Washington to Cam Ranh Bay. Cam Ranh is located at an inlet of the South China Sea situated on the south-eastern coast of Vietnam, between Phan Rang and Nha Trang. I was so tired after the journey and the heat was killing.

M-155 Sheridan of C Troop, 1st. Squadron, crosses a ravine in An Loc, III Corps, near the Cambodian border.

(Photo by Dr. Barry Beaven. Taken from www.11thcavnam.com)



In our hammocks, we were told we'd be called at 07:00 to parade and get further orders. I was flat out and missed the first call. At 11:00 there was another parade. I fell in and my name was called. "Where were you at 07:00". 'I heard nothing' I said. "It's going to cost you. You're going up to Blackhorse". I didn't know what that meant. I'd never heard of Blackhorse in my life.

As it turned out the Blackhorse were the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. They were an army within an army, famous for their exploits in World War II. The Blackhorse Regiment deployed to South East Asia on March 11th, 1966. The Regiment specialised for combat in a counterinsurgency environment. The units M113 armoured personnel carriers were modified with two M60 machineguns with protective gun shield mounted at the port and starboard rear of the vehicle, and a combination circular and flat frontal

The Blackhorse Regiment deployed to South East Asia on March 11th, 1966. The Regiment specialised for combat in a counterinsurgency environment

gun shields added around the .50" heavy machine gun mounted at the commander's hatch. These modifications turned the M113 into an armoured cavalry assault vehicle. In theatre, the troopers referred to it as ACAV. The regiment was also equipped with M48A3 Patton tanks. The tank was named after General George S. Patton of World War II fame. The unit also had a helicopter company.

While I was with Blackhorse, Base Camp was located approximately 3.7 miles south of the village of Xuan Loc on Route 2 and around 1.2 miles southeast of the village of Long Goia. Saigon was about 22 miles to the west along Route 1.

When I arrived in Xuan Loc, Blackhorse

were just coming off Operation Manhattan. This Operation, starting on April 23rd, was a thrust into the Long Nguyen Secret Zone by the 1st and 2nd Squadrons. This zone was a long suspected regional headquarter of the Viet Cong (VC). 60 tunnel complexes were uncovered, 1,884 fortifications were destroyed, and 621 tons of rice was evacuated during these operations. Blackhorse had a reputation for carrying out effective Reconnaissance In Force (RIF) operations. Operation Manhattan ended on May 11th, 1967.

Two or three of us paraded in front of Colonel Roy Farley, he himself only newly appointed the regiment's Commanding Officer on May 8th. The Regimental

Command Sergeant Major at the time was Donald E. Horn. "I see you're an Irishman" Farley said. "What's that you have" he asked pointing at my camera. 'I'm a projectionist' I said. 'I show training films'. He bellowed out, "Aint' got no room for no training films here. You can be my driver". That's good I thought. Well I was at that for about a week. One evening I was smoking pot with a bunch of other lads. The next day the Colonel called me over, "Coyne I hear you were smoking pot". There was no point in denying it. "Right as punishment you are going up with the scouts".

An ongoing operation at the time was Operation Kittyhawk. It began on April 1967, and ran to March 21st, 1968. The Regiment was tasked to secure and pacify Long Khanh Province. It achieved three main objectives: VC were kept from interfering with travel by locals on the main roads, South Vietnamese were provided medical treatment in programs like MEDCAP and DENCAP and finally, RIF operations were employed to keep the VC off balance, making it impossible for them to mount offensive operations. These operations brought us up to and into Cambodia and around the famous Iron Triangle.

The Iron Triangle, or Tam Giác Sắt in Vietnamese, was a 120-square mile area in the Binh Duong Province. It got its name due to it being a stronghold of Viet Minh activity. The Triangle was located between the Saigon River on the west and the Tinh River on the east and bordering Route 13 about

25 miles north of Saigon. The southern apex was seven miles from Phu Cong, the capital of Binh Duong Province. Its proximity to Saigon concerted American and South Vietnamese efforts to destabilise the region as a power base for Viet Cong operations.

The Iron Triangle had a vast network of tunnels from which the Viet Cong operated. The tunnels, built during the war with the French, was said to have a network of over 30,000 miles at its height throughout North and South Vietnam. Hundreds of miles of this network were in the Iron Triangle. They were especially concentrated in the area around the town of Củ Chi.

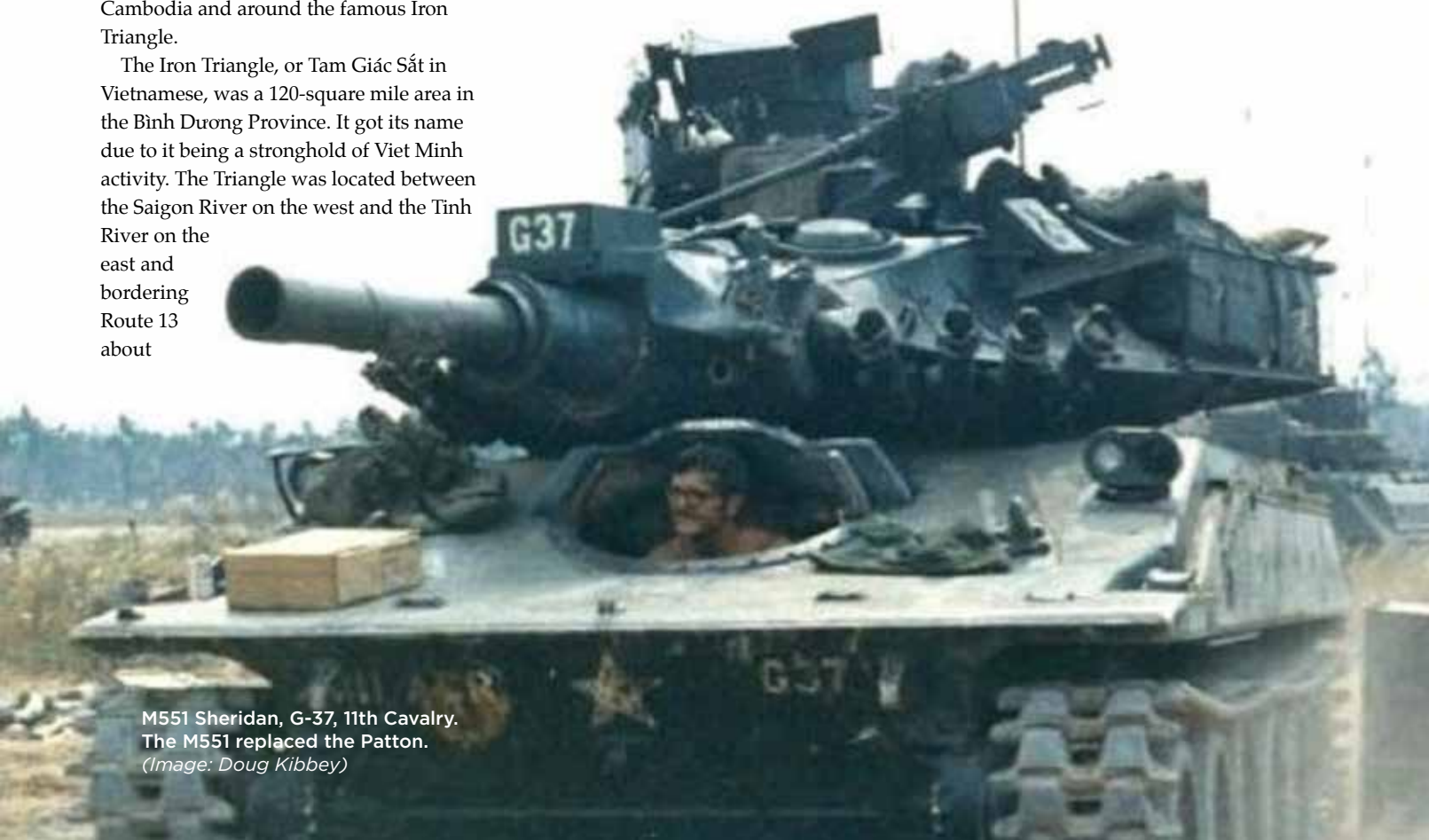
As part of Kittyhawk, 1st and 3rd Squadrons were carried out Operation Emporia from July 21st-September 14th. These were road clearing operations with limited RIF missions. As I was the spare man I used to regularly get called down to check things out – foxholes and tunnels were very regular.

I was up with the scouts for three weeks. A replacement was needed on one of the tanks in 1st Platoon, Delta Company, 1st Squadron, after a trooper was killed. I was transferred there and that's where I

remained. In Vietnam, a Patton tank had a crew of five (commander, gunner, loader, driver and back-deck gunner). My call sign was Delta13Charlie. Delta meant D Company, 13 was our tank, and Charlie was me. As in C for Coyne. Whereas Delta13 was the tank commander, Delta13Kilo was for Kilock, and Delta13Foxtrot was for Fisher.

On our Patton tank I was the back-deck gunner – otherwise known as the spare man. I had an M60 machine gun, M79 grenade launcher, an M3 .45" grease gun, and an M16 assault rifle. We didn't use the range finder down in the turret that much. In the close environment of the jungle visibility was very poor. My vantage point on top was critical. We lost four tanks in my time. I was also wounded four times. RPG's (Rocket Propelled Grenades) were a common enemy. They'd hit the tank and bits of shrapnel would go everywhere.

We rarely saw Base Camp, as we were constantly on operations. Food, fuel, ammunition, spare parts, were all flown out to us by helicopter. The squadrons were very self-sufficient. Tank engines were even changed in the middle of the jungle.



M551 Sheridan, G-37, 11th Cavalry.
The M551 replaced the Patton.
(Image: Doug Kibbey)

EYEWITNESS

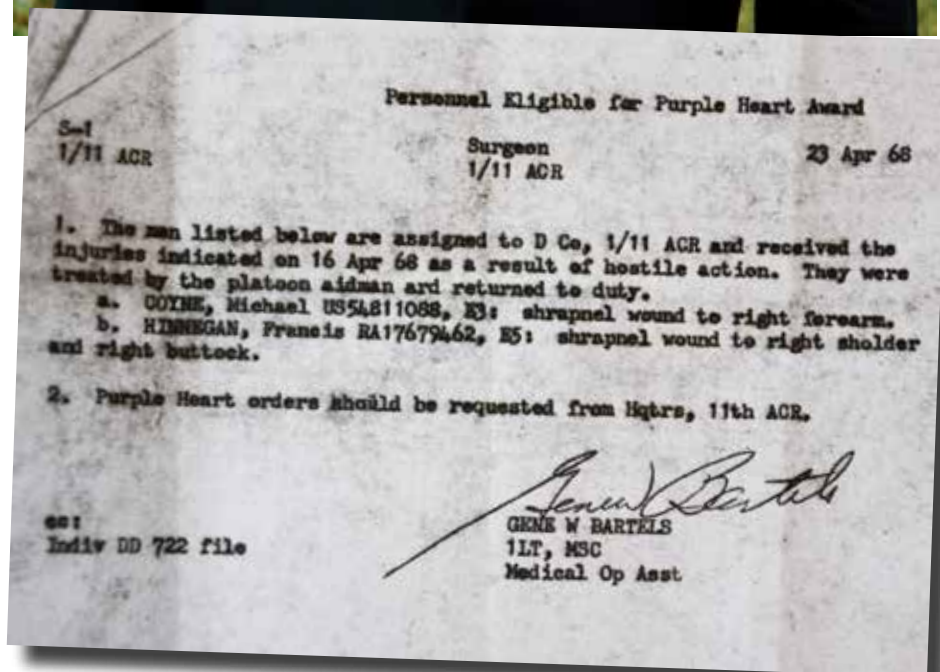
In the Summer of 1967, the South Vietnamese presidential elections were being held. As part of Operation Valdosta I & II, the regiment was tasked with providing security at polling stations during the elections and to maintain reaction forces to counter VC agitation. 1st and 3rd Squadrons operated in the Long Khánh District. The presidential elections were held on September 3rd. The result was a victory for General Nguyễn Văn Thiệu, who won 34.8% of the vote. The operation was a great success. Voter turnout was 83.2%.

On one occasion, up at Binh Long we were conducting a RIF. Lieutenant Reid came up one day, "we need you to carry the radio and go up and check out a fork in the trail with myself and Smithy". Smithy was the Sergeant from Kansas City. I put on the radio and went up to the fork about 1,000m up the trail. I was standing behind. The Lieutenant and Sergeant Smith were in front to my left and right. The Lieutenant said to me "check that trail there". Smithy said "it's ok I'll check it". Up he jumped and went over. The next thing BANG! The top half of his body was gone. His legs were still standing there. Hard to believe, but his legs were still there. It was so fast. I looked down and parts of his rib cage was sticking in my arm.

Within a fraction of a second myself and Lieutenant Reid were on the ground, our tanks were firing over our heads. The rockets that had hit us had gone on to hit the tanks. The Patton tank used the 90mm M377 canister anti-personnel round. This canister projectile was filled with 1,281 spherical steel pellets for use at short ranges. It was particularly effective against personnel in dense foliage. The tanks opened-up with everything. All around us the jungle started to come down around us.

.....
Today Michael Coyne lives in Jenkinstown. As we went to press Michael was travelling with his son to Vietnam. Make sure and get our Summer issue for part two of Michael's story. As the Blackhorse Regiment entered 1968, North Vietnam and the Viet Cong prepared for the Tet Offensive.

Michael Coyne at his home in Jenkinstown. The below document is a citation for a purple heart. Michael was wounded several times during the course of his tour.



From Green Fields to Rice Paddies

The Irish who fought in Vietnam

Interview with Declan Hughes, Director at Irish Veterans



A helicopter rescues wounded soldiers from the battlefield. This type of evacuation was known as a dust-off.
(Photo: U.S. Army)



The 50's, 60's, and 70's, were the height of the Cold War. A war that could turn hot at any moment. At the time proxy wars were fought around the world. The Vietnam war was one such conflict. It occurred from November 1st, 1955, to the fall of Saigon on April 30th, 1975. The war was fought between communist North Vietnam and the western backed South Vietnam. Irish living in the United States, Australia, and New Zealand, found themselves surrounded by friends and neighbours enlisting and heading to South Vietnam. Thus, some of these Irish immigrants found themselves in uniform too. Some volunteered, others were drafted.

For the layman, the horrors of Vietnam are unthinkable. Movies such as *Platoon*, *Apocalypse Now*, and *We Were Soldiers* give a depiction of a war where soldiers

faced a formidable and determined People's Army of Vietnam (or North Vietnamese Army), while in the south the Viet Cong (or the National Liberation Front) fought a vicious guerrilla campaign.

During a trip to the United States in 1996, I visited both Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty, I got a chance to see what immigrants saw when arriving at their new home. For tens of thousands of Irish men and women, they would never return to their native land. My trip brought me to Washington D.C. and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, commonly referred to as 'the Wall'. The Wall lists the names of over 58,000 men and women who were killed during the Vietnam War while serving in the U.S. military. Some 1,200 of these are still classified as Missing in Action. Allies of the U.S. lost hundreds more. Upwards of 2

million Vietnamese, military and civilian, also lost their lives. Many of the names on the American memorial would seem more at home in Germany, England, Poland, or Ireland.

The following year, I was entrusted with a ring given to me through the Vietnamese community in Dublin, where I worked. This college ring had allegedly been removed from the finger of a dead American G.I. after a battle by a Vietnamese soldier. I was asked to locate the family of the dead G.I., and return the ring.

In March 1998, I brought the ring to the offices of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund in Washington D.C., the organisation that built the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 1982. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund also have a half scale replica of the Wall which travels the country. While there,



I attended a press conference. During this event, I asked when was the replica going to Ireland? Thinking it a joke of some kind, I was asked why it should go to a country that was not involved in Vietnam? My reply was that some 40 million Americans claim Irish ancestry. Therefore, it is only logical that Irish descendants fought and died in that war.

That was it. The search was now on to find Irish men and women who served in Vietnam. Finding those of Irish descent is almost an impossible task as so many no longer have an Irish surname. Some on the other hand trace their Irish ancestry back several generations. My starting point was the Wall and identifying Irish born who were killed in Vietnam while serving in the U.S. military. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund gave me access to their

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington D.C.
(Wikipedia)



The U.S. Department of Defense records at the time only listed one Irish-born killed in Vietnam – John Cecil Driver, from Ringsend in Dublin.

directories. Some records led onto contacts or more information back in Ireland. I soon found myself talking to family members, and visiting graveyards around Ireland.

The U.S. Department of Defense records at the time only listed one Irish-born killed in Vietnam – John Cecil Driver, from Ringsend in Dublin. His brother Jim, who died in October 2005, kept John's memory alive by a small exhibition case hanging on the wall of his barber shop, and which contained his Purple Heart medal and other artefacts. Indeed, the Ringsend Barber Shop became something of a landmark in Dublin, with many people travelling from overseas to pay a visit.

I contacted John's brother Jim. He filled me in on the extraordinary life of his brother. John had been first in line to inherit the family business, but left poverty-stricken Dublin to find adventure and make his fortune. He joined the British Army. He saw action in the Far East and attained the rank of sergeant with the Special Air Service. Moving on he joined up with the Rhodesian Army, where his two Irish Wolfhounds caused something of a stir, and enhanced his growing reputation. But even

the exotic sights of Africa failed to satisfy him, and in the early 1960's he arrived in America and enlisted again.

His first tour to Vietnam was 1965-1966, as a sergeant with 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. Recommended for officer training, he rotated home and got married. His second tour to Vietnam was as a 1st Lieutenant with the 101st Airborne Division. Only a month from his 33rd birthday, he was killed on April 17th 1969, in Thua Thien Province. He left behind a young bride and an infant son.

Other Dubliners alongside John on the Wall include Lance Corporal Paul Ivan Maher, U.S. Marine Corps (USMC), who was born in the Liberties. Private First Class Maurice Joseph O'Callaghan, USMC, whose parents originally buried him in New Jersey, but at the height of the anti-war protests, exhumed him and brought him home to Mount Jerome Cemetery in Dublin, where he lies today.

Of the eight women on the Wall, one is Irish. 2nd Lieutenant Pamela Dorothy Donovan, Army Nurse Corps. She gave up her Irish citizenship to enlist as a Nurse

REMEMBERING OUR PAST



Lieutenant John Driver



Cpl Patrick Gallagher



LCpl Paul Ivan Maher, USMC

specifically to work in Vietnam. Per her obituary, she 'volunteered for duty in Vietnam', she 'expressed the desire to aid servicemen wounded in combat'. Pamela was born in Merseyside while her parents were there doing war work, but quickly brought her back to Dublin, where she was reared and educated, and from where she later travelled to America on her Irish passport.

From Cavan, I discovered John Coyle and Michael Smith; Ed Scully and Michael McCarthy from Cork; Terry FitzGerald from Kerry; from Limerick, Edmond Landers, Private First Class John Collopy and Tim Daly; from Galway, there is Lance Corporal Peter Nee, USMC and Anthony O'Reilly, U.S. Army. Anthony O'Reilly loved nothing more than boating on the Corrib, and was a champion Irish dancer. He died two days after his 30th birthday in June 1968. Lance Corporal Bernard Freyne USMC was from Roscommon, while 19-year-old Phil Bancroft, also USMC, was from Belfast. Army Sergeant Patrick Christopher Nevin and Corporal Patrick Gallagher, USMC, were from Mayo.

Patrick Gallagher was awarded the Navy Cross for cheating four enemy grenades. The first one he kicked out of the dugout. The second one he jumped on to save the lives of his buddies. The third and fourth ones exploded but failed to kill him. Then

he threw the one under him into the river, where it exploded upon impact. Patrick was to be awarded the medal back in his home town in Mayo, and many (including myself) would contend he should have been awarded the Medal of Honor. The village was decorated for his arrival, but his coffin returned instead; shot by a sniper only days before he was due to fly home. He was 23 years old.

What we do know to date, is that 23 Irish men and one woman died in Vietnam while serving with the U.S. military

Irish-born and those of Irish heritage also served in the Australian and New Zealand militaries. Their names are on similar memorial Walls in those countries. Signalman David Doyle, served with Australia's 3rd Cavalry Regiment, with whom he lost his life serving in Vietnam. We don't yet have a photograph of David, just a print from the Australian newspaper which, in the 1980's published the faces of all 500 Australian Vietnam fatalities. Irish-born killed took up four columns in that list.

Another Irishman serving with the Royal Australian Regiment was George Nagle

from Tipperary. After he was killed, he was destined to be buried in the nearest military cemetery. His family however, insisted his body be returned to Ireland, and they were forced to raise the money to repatriate him. Sergeant Tom Birnie was from Belfast. Tom served with the 7th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment.

I trawled through Irish newspapers from the period to see if Irish serving in Vietnam were mentioned. Many like Patrick Gallagher were. One story in the Irish Times from 1968 recalls the exploits of an Irish nun:

'A US Army captain and three men with a helicopter launched a rescue mission that ended only when 8 nuns and nearly 200 Vietnamese girls were safe at the Vinh Long airstrip. As the helicopter left with the last load, Vietcong guerillas were swarming through the playground of the Centre of Professional Guidance for Girls, a school conducted by Sisters of the Good Shepherd Order, 60 miles' south-west of Saigon. "The helicopter boys should each be given a halo and a pair of wings," said Sr Mary Hayden, the school Director, from New Ross, County Wexford. The Mother Superior and three other sisters at the school are also from Ireland. A reporter who interviewed Sr Mary said that the rescue followed a night of terror for the sisters and pupils, when the Viet Cong smashed into Vinh Long'.

During April and May 1999, the replica Vietnam Veteran Memorial Wall made its first ever journey outside the United States, arriving in Ireland to the great surprise of many. The guidelines conceived for the tour were that it be strictly non-political, and that it visit each of the four provinces. The memorial spent three days at each of five venues: Collins Barracks, Cork; Dublin Castle; Queen's University, Belfast, where President Mary McAleese paid her respects; NUI Galway and Adare Manor, Limerick. At Adare, the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, presided over a reception for the families, and where a statue to the Irish Vietnam dead was inaugurated in the grounds. (The statue has since been removed by owner to the U.S.)

Seminars were held at each venue which focused on aspects of the period. For example; the war from an historical context, service and sacrifice, the United Nations, trauma and reconciliation, and the anti-war movement.

After promoting the Wall on national radio I received a call from a Tom Kelly, a Roscommon man who had served with the 173rd Airborne Regiment. He had heard about the work I was doing and told me he was a Vietnam veteran. Shortly after that I received a call from Ed Somers, from Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford. Ed had served with the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment in Vietnam. He explained that while he was in Vietnam he had met and become firm friends with a guy by the name of Tom Kelly. When the two served there in 1965-1966, the Australians had been attached to the 173rd. As the two guys were Irish they naturally hung around together. One day Tom's unit were heavily engaged and suffered heavy losses. Ed never found Tom amongst the wounded or dead, and presumed his friend was dead. As it turned out Tom had been medivaced out, and eventually made his way back to Ireland and raised a family. Ed later left the military and Australia, and returned back to Ireland also. When speaking to Ed I explained I had only a few days previously been speaking to a Tom Kelly. I put the two men in touch and they've been inseparable ever since!

What we do know to date, is that 23 Irish men and one woman died in Vietnam while serving with the U.S. military; one died in



Canadian uniform (as an Observer), one died working for U.S. AID, while one man lost his life serving with Air America; four men died with the Australians. We don't know how many served and survived, though I would estimate hundreds, if not perhaps up to two thousand. A very rough estimate would be 2,000 Irish born served in Vietnam, but at this time it is impossible to know for sure.

Since I began my research historian James Durney published: *Vietnam - The Irish Experience*. This account further explores the Irish involvement in Vietnam and is an excellent read for anyone interested in the subject.

Irishmen fought and Irishmen died in Vietnam, as they did in almost every war for centuries. They left Ireland, mostly to escape the grinding poverty that was this country in the 1950's and 1960's. They sought a better life, a better standard of living for their families back in Ireland, or their new families in their new homes. The Irish who served, and the Irish who died, should be remembered for their courage, sacrifice and honourable service. With the visit of the

Wall to Ireland in 1999, it was wonderful to see tribute paid to those Irish who served in Vietnam. The visit of the Wall also brought out surviving Vietnam veterans living here in Ireland. Many are members of the American Legion here. The visit of the Wall gave them a chance to meet old friends and tell their story.

Declan Hughes is a director of Irish Veterans. The charity are currently working on a Heritage Centre that will commemorate all Irishmen and women, and those of Irish descent, who have served in military worldwide.

You can contact/join Irish Veterans via their website at:
www.irishveterans.org
 or via
 Irish Veterans
 Chapter #1 (SEAL LT Michael
 Murphy, MoH)
 c/o The White House
 Kinsale, Co. Cork
 Rep. of Ireland



Members of 1st Artillery Regiment in training on the QF 12-pounder 12 cwt coast defence gun.
(Photo by A/B Davey Jones. Irish Naval Service)

The Guns of Spike Island

Photos by Ken Mooney and Spike Island

In the last 1,300 years Spike Island, in Cork Harbour, has been host to a 6th century Monastery and a 24-acre fortress that became the largest convict depot in the world during Victorian times. The island's rich history has included monks and monasteries, rioters, captains and convicts and sinners and saints. Today the island is dominated by the 200-year-old Fort Mitchel, the star shaped fortress which became a prison holding over 2,300 convicts. Now a magnificently restored visitors centre the fort is open to the public all year round. The fort is also home to Ireland's largest collection of restored artillery. Superintendent Spike Island, Tom

O'Neill (a retired Reserve Defence Forces officer and Prison Officer), gave us a guided tour around Spike Island's defences and their artillery collection.

When Tom advised us that we'd need the entire day to see the restored fort, we thought he was kidding. Spike Island is an experience like none other in the country. Your journey starts at Kennedy Pier, in Cobh, where you embark on a ferry. The trip across for us modern day tourists is one of beauty. The estuary of the river Lee is full of stunning scenery and all kinds of wildlife. Once inside the walls you are immediately taken aback by the sheer size of the fort. On the ferry over it is difficult

to grasp the scale. Inside, you can only imagine what the fortress must have been like when full of soldiers and bristling with artillery.

As a natural deep water port, Cork has been a tempting strategic target throughout history. Due to threats by the French in the 18th century, it was decided to improve the fortifications of Cork Harbour. Spike Island, at the mouth of the estuary, acts as a natural gun emplacement. A pre-existing fortification existed on Spike Island, but a more modern fort was needed. In 1789, building work began on a stone-built fort designed by Colonel Charles Vallancey. It was named Fort Westmoreland in honour



Fort Mitchel - Guarding the entrance to Cork Harbour.

of John Fane, 10th Earl of Westmoreland and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland from 1789 to 1794.

With the threat from Napoleon, fortifications in the harbour were further enhanced. The next construction began in 1804. The six-bastion star shaped fort was

The star shape allows the defenders in the fort to fire over all parts of the island, making the whole island an effective kill zone for anyone who dare enter

HERITAGE TRAIL

C Block and Mitchel Hall in the centre.



QF 4.7-inch coastal gun



A Bofors L/70 alongside a QF 18-pounder.

completed by the mid-19th century. The fort was designed to stop enemy vessels in their path and defend itself from landing attacks. The star shape allows the defenders in the fort to fire over all parts of the island, making the whole island an effective kill zone for anyone who dare attack. Flanking galleries further allowed the defender to pour musket and artillery fire into the ranks of a landing force that got close enough. The fort is surrounded by a dry moat. If troops landed they couldn't see the moat. Facing them was a raised slope called a glacis. Advancing in the open they would have been cut to pieces.

This fort was originally armed with 29 24-pounder guns, two 12-pounder guns and twelve 6-pounder cannon. Along with howitzers and mortars it was a formidable obstacle in any belligerent's path. As technology evolved so did the artillery on the island. When excavations were taking

place in the fort, three old smoothbores were recovered, later restored and are now on display.

Supported by other forts – Carlisle (now Fort Davis), Camden (now Fort Meagher), and Templebredy, it is no wonder no one ever dared attack Cork. Fort Camden and Fort Carlisle were built at opposite sides of the harbour entrance during the period of the American War of Independence, Templebredy was built in 1910, at the back of Crosshaven facing out to the sea. If an enemy vessel managed to get through the entrance, straight in front of them would have been the guns of Spike Island. The fort was of such strategic importance that the British First Sea Lord, Winston Churchill, later called the island 'The sentinel tower of the approaches to Western Europe'.

By the turn of the 20th century the fort was armed with breech loading rifled guns. The 6-inch Mk VII gun, together with the

9.2-inch Mk X gun, provided the main coastal defence throughout the British Empire, and later Ireland, from the early 1900's until the abolition of coastal artillery in the 1950's. When the fort was handed over to the Irish Free State in 1938, it was renamed Fort Mitchel after the Nationalist hero, John Mitchel, Mitchel, who was a prisoner on Spike Island in May 1848.

As Tom took us around the restored bastions he told us that that Spike was armed with the 6-inch guns. The 9.2-inch were mounted on Templebredy and Fort Davis. Unfortunately, there are no 9.2-inch guns left in the country. However, Spike Island has two beautifully restored 6-inch guns. Grey Point Fort near Belfast also has two, former Irish Army, restored 6-inch guns. The 6-inch guns had a crew of 9. It could fire Lyddite, HE, and Shrapnel 100 lb shells. With a rate of fire of eight rounds a minute, it could engage targets up to

Members of 1st Artillery Regiment running through drills on the QF 12-pounder. (Photo by A/B Davey Jones)



13,400m (light charge) or 14,400m (heavy charge).

The 6-inch guns at Spike were originally mounted out in the open. Interestingly, during the early 1940's, the Irish Army moved the 6-inch guns on Spike into underground emplacements. This was some undertaking. The most logical reason for this was to protect them from aerial or naval bombardment.

Today on Bastion 3 where the 6-inch guns used to be, are a battery of four QF 12-pounder 12 cwt guns. They are still in working condition and are the Irish Army's saluting battery for Cork Harbour. As part of the restoration, the underground emplacements have been completely restored - along with 6-inch guns. The underground emplacements include: crew quarters, a Battery Observation Post, and gun emplacement. The Battery Observation Post gives you a clear view out to the

mouth of Cork Harbour. From here the officer would have worked out the distance, elevation and range of the enemy target.

The Gun Park

Spike Island is also home to a unique collection of artillery pieces. The collection traces the use of artillery in Ireland from the 1700's up to the present day Irish Army. Some pieces you will be very familiar with, including the Bofors L/60 and L/70 40mm anti-aircraft guns, and the British Ordnance QF 18 and 25-pounders. Others such as a 17-inch anti-tank gun and a 4.7-inch coastal gun are one of a kind examples in Ireland. All are kept out of the elements in the Gun Park.

The earliest artillery piece in the collection is the 12-pounder cannon. It is one of Spike Island's oldest artillery pieces. The crest of King George III on the barrel dates the piece to the late 1700's. Designed as a naval gun,

this piece was used for coastal defence. This is indicated by the presence of a breeching ring at the rear of the gun, through which a strong rope was passed and fixed to either side of the gun port opening to control recoil when the gun rolled back upon firing. This is one of three such cannon on Spike Island. They were used as bollards on the pier and were removed in circa 1999, restored and mounted for display.

The 7-inch Rifled Muzzle Loading Cannon on display represents the progression of artillery technology, with the introduction of rifling grooves cut into the barrel to impart spin and stability to the shell while in flight. Dating from 1865, three of these massive 7-inch guns were mounted on Spike Island, one on each of the three bastions facing Cobh. The introduction of breech loaded guns rendered them obsolete.

The QF 12-pounder was originally designed as a shipboard naval weapon,

A view of the dry moat, Bastion 4, and the Flanking Galleries.



also used for coastal defence. Batteries were positioned in Forts Carlisle and Camden, providing protection against torpedo boats and covering the Cork Harbour minefield. The thickly armoured shield provided protection for the crew operating in open gun emplacements and is considered extremely rare.

A one of a kind and the envy of the artillery community is the QF 4.7-inch coastal gun. This gun was made by the Elswick Ordnance Company of England. Spike Island's 4.7-inch dates from 1910. It is one of only two known surviving examples in Ireland; the other is at Fort Dunree in Co. Donegal. This rare gun has been the subject of an extensive restoration project and must be among the best-preserved examples of its type in the world. Luckily the brass fittings and breach block were still in the Irish Army stores. 'It was originally thought that the guns were from Bere Island. However, the Fortress Study Group found that the 4.7-inch was originally bought for the Irish Army in 1940, for a gun emplacement in Galway Bay. The emplacement was never built and the guns were put in storage. How many were brought in is unclear.

The Bofors anti-aircraft guns are very much at home in Spike. During the Emergency years (1939-1946) anti-aircraft emplacements were built on Spike. In later years, the 4th Air Defence Battery was also based on the island. The Bofors L/60 pm display is one of the very guns that served on Spike from 1980 - 1985.

Another rare artillery piece in the

A one of a kind and the envy of the artillery community is the QF 4.7-inch coastal gun. This gun was made by the Elswick Ordnance Company of England. Spike Island's 4.7-inch dates from 1910, is one of only two known surviving examples in Ireland.

collection is the Ordnance QF 17-pounder Anti-Tank Gun. Developed in World War II to counter new and heavily armoured German tanks, the 17-pounder proved a battlefield success. The 17-pounder served with the Irish Army from 1949 to 1962. It too is fully restored.

Spike Island visitors centre is only open two years. In that very short time the team on the island has done incredible work. The artillery collection on the island is an aspect of Irish military history that has not been written about that much. At one time gun emplacements and forts with their coastal artillery dotted the coastline well into the 1950's. One by one the forts were no longer used and the gunners story was forgotten. Gun by gun and barrel by barrel, the team on Spike Island is preserving and retelling that story.

The management on Spike Island are most grateful to the Department of Defence and members of the Defence Forces for their outstanding support in the project. They are also very fortunate in having a dedicated team of volunteers working on the guns and in the museum.

There are many more fascinating stories

to come from Spike Island including the Aud Exhibition and that of the prisoners who were there. So do keep an eye out in future issues for more on Ireland's island fortress.

Spike Island – Cork Harbour

Ferries depart from Kennedy pier Cobh, which is right in the town centre next to Titanic Cobh. Tickets can be purchased from the kiosk on the pier, or save money and book online.

Online booking is highly recommended during the busy summer months to secure you preferred sailing and avoid disappointment. Open year round for pre-booked tour groups of 15 or more, contact us for booking.

Regular sailings for walk up passengers (advance online booking recommended):

For pre-booking call: 021-4811485
Or

E: admin@spikeislandcork.ie to book
For sailing times from Kennedy pier please check:
www.spikeislandcork.ie/visit



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U.S. Infantry Soldier – Vietnam

American military advisors were first deployed to French Indochina in 1950. Direct U.S. involvement however did not escalate until the early 1960's, with troop levels tripling in 1961 and again in 1962. After the Gulf of Tonkin incident in 1964, a further increase in U.S. military presence was authorised. Regular U.S. combat units were deployed beginning in 1965 and ended in 1973.

U.S. soldiers consisted of volunteers and draftees. The North Vietnamese Army was a tough and formidable conventional force with Soviet and Chinese supplied equipment. The southern communist Viet Cong (commonly referred to as VC or Charlie) on the other hand waged an insurgency campaign. For the U.S. soldier the jungle environment in Vietnam was hot and humid.

Rip Stop OG-107 Jungle Fatigues (Third Pattern)

The OG-107 was the basic work utility uniform of all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces from 1952 to 1989. The designation came from the U.S. Army's colouring code of shades of dark green: Olive Green 107 and Olive Green 507. The OG-107 was cotton and OG-507 polyester-cotton blend introduced in the early 1970's. All versions were made from an 8.5ounce cotton sateen. The shirt could be tucked in or worn outside the trousers depending on the preference of the local commander. It consisted of a button front and two simple patch pockets on the upper chest that closed by means of a buttoned flap. The trousers were straight leg pants intended to be bloused into boot tops. They had two patch pockets in the front with slash openings and two patch pockets on the back with a button flap. The cotton versions tended to fade quickly to greenish grey, while the poly-cotton variant used in the OG-507 stayed darker longer.

Rip Stop meant the uniform was made from reinforced thread. In the case of a thread getting snagged, the thread would snap rather than keep unravelling. The Third Pattern came later in the war as modifications were required to make the uniform less snagable in the jungle. It had no epaulettes, sizing tabs at the waist, and the buttons were covered when closed. Rank marking, name tags, and unit patches were all but removed or subdued. This soldier has a subdued patch of the 1st Cavalry Regiment. Soldiers commonly wore a towel or rag around their neck to catch the sweat.



M1 Helmet

The M1 Helmet used during Vietnam was unchanged since the Second World War. Some helmets that were issued dated from the 1940's. The outer pot was made of steel, while the inner liner was made from fibreglass. By this time modifications had been made to the chin and nap straps for a more secure fit.

The helmet was covered with a camouflaged 'Mitchel Cover'. This cover was unique to troops in Vietnam. Double sided, it is green on the outside and modelled brown on the inside. A rubber band was used on the outside of the helmet to insert local foliage. Soldiers used the band to keep items dry when wading through water or for easy access. Common items in the band from period photographs include: insect repellent, oil for the rifle, or a P38 tin opener.



Bandelier:

Could hold eight magazines of M16 ammunition.



M26 'Lemon' Fragmentation Hand Grenade



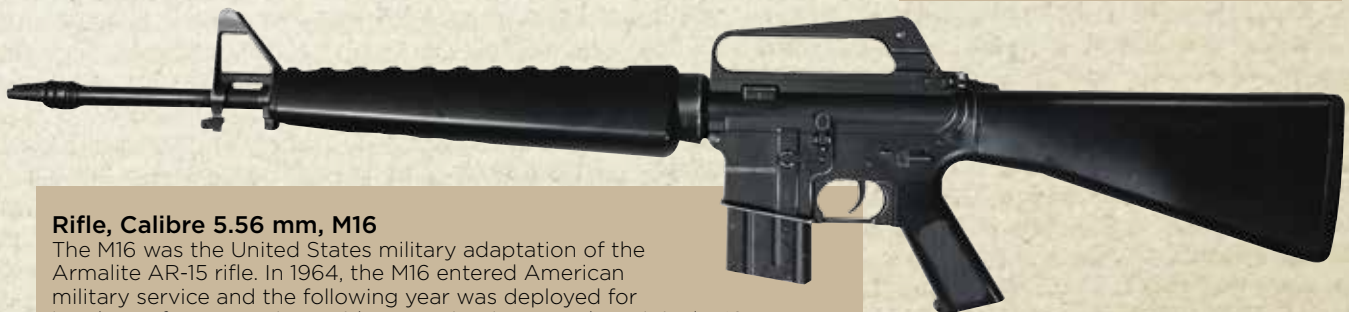
Dog Tags

Soldiers were issued with two dog tags, which had their name, rank, number and blood type. Some soldiers placed a third in their boots.



Canvas Side Jungle Boot

The boots are unique to Vietnam being specifically designed for the South East Asian climate. They were made from canvas and had drain holes to allow the boots to dry quicker. Later boots replaced the standard vibram sole with what was known as a Panama Thread rubber sole. It was found in the muddy jungles that the vibram soles did not allow the mud to escape and the sole would fill up. The Panama Sole allowed mud to escape easier.



Rifle, Calibre 5.56 mm, M16

The M16 was the United States military adaptation of the Armalite AR-15 rifle. In 1964, the M16 entered American military service and the following year was deployed for jungle warfare operations with troops in Vietnam. The original M16 was a select-fire, 5.56x45mm rifle with a 20-round magazine.



Recollections of Escape, Internment and Freedom

Interview with Robert MacMillan by Fiona MacMillan
(Rob's daughter)

Like many others, my parents Peter and Viola, were young when the Second World War started. They had married in Farnham in Surrey in 1937. My father was the son of the Bishop of Guildford and was an old Etonian and Oxford rowing blue. My mother was the daughter of Vice-Admiral Vincent Barkly Molteno. My father was a 24-year old

Lieutenant when he was deployed to Hong Kong in January 1939, serving in the 8th Heavy Regiment, Royal Artillery. He had studied history at Oxford and then spent a year learning German at Heidelberg University, before joining up. In 1938 he was posted to the Shore Battery at Stanley in Hong Kong, that famously pointed out to sea. My mother told me years later that it

was a lovely life. Not too much soldiering, but plenty of sailing and fun. In early 1939, with not much happening, my father applied to do a Dutch Linguist course in Batavia, the Dutch East Indies.

They travelled by boat from Hong Kong to Hanoi in Indo China. They visited Ankor Wat by ox cart and finished up in Bangkok in Thailand. There they caught the train



Admiral Chan Chak with his Lo Hons, Chinese Officials, and the escapees from Hong Kong at the "Wai On hospital complex run by the Seventh Day Adventist in Waichow on December 30th, 1941. Peter Hugh MacMillan is sitting bottom left.
(Photo from Buddy Hide's collection)

down the Malay Peninsula to Singapore. By the time, they reached Batavia, my mother was pregnant with me. They had a happy few months staying with a Dutch Naval Captain and his wife while my father learnt Dutch.

On September 3rd, 1939, war was declared in Europe and soon afterwards my father received a telegram ordering him to report back to his battery in Hong Kong. He left behind a very pregnant wife who had never been away from home before. She was just 22 years old.

The Dutch Naval Captain and his wife were very good to my mother: and in late September arranged a passage for her in a pig boat back to Hong Kong. I was born in the British Military Hospital on the Peak on October 23rd, 1939. I did not have too good a start for I was a blue baby. My mother's blood and my own were not compatible. But we both had good treatment and survived.

War Comes to South Asia

In the summer of 1940, all service families were evacuated to Australia and I had my first birthday in Sydney along with my oldest chum, Derek Bird, who is three months older than I, an enduring

friendship. His father was also based in Hong Kong. In the summer of 1941, my father found out that he could get local leave in the Philippines. He wrote to his young wife and arranged to meet her at a U.S. Army recreational facility 120 miles north of Manila, the capital.

Along with 550 other allied civilians we were interned in the old Philippine police barracks of Camp Holmes to begin what turned into three years of internment.

My mother and I travelled by boat from Australia by sea to Manila with Daphne Bird and Derek. When we reached Manila, we caught the transport up the mountain to Baguio. The idea was that the two fathers would visit from Hong Kong over the Christmas period. By then the two fathers would not have seen their wives for eighteen months.

The visit by the two fathers never

happened. On December 7th, 1941, a Japanese Naval Aircraft attacked Pearl Harbor. It was December 8th, on our Western side of the International Date Line. My mother later told me we were having breakfast about 8am when low flying planes were heard. Then the cry "They are Jap planes"! was heard. There had been no warning and war had not been declared. They bombed and machine gunned the airbase next to our accommodation. Many were killed and wounded. Most of the American planes were destroyed on the ground. Within fourteen days' Japanese troops landed at Lingayen Gulf on the coast. Along with 550 other allied civilians we were interned in the old Philippine police barracks of Camp Holmes in Baguio to begin what turned into three years of internment.

Attack on Hong Kong

Meanwhile back in Hong Kong, my father did not have much time to worry about his family. In October 1940, he had been transferred to the Battle Box Headquarters (BBHQ) as a General Staff Officer, 3rd grade (GSO3) (Operations). Now a Captain he was on the staff of Major General C. M. Maltby, General Officer Commanding Hong Kong. They were based in the Battle Box on the Peak overlooking Hong Kong Harbour.

The Japanese attacking Hong Kong from Shumchun.
(Photo from: HMCS Prince Robert tribute site)



On December 8th, Japanese planes flew from mainland China and destroyed the twelve ancient Royal Air Force (RAF) planes on the ground at Kai tak airport. There had been no warning. Within two days more than 40,000 Japanese troops crossed the border into the New Territories of Hong Kong. Against this overwhelming force the General quickly realised he could not hold the mainland part of the colony. He withdrew four British Battalions to Hong Kong Island. By doing this he hoped to hold out for weeks if not months, but that proved to be a wishful dream.

On December 18th, the first Japanese troops landed at Lyemoo to the east of the harbour. Strong point after strong point was bombed and destroyed. Despite Churchill's plea to fight to the last man, however, the water supply that came from mainland China had been cut. The Governor, Sir Mark Aitchison Young, felt he had little option but to surrender. A ceasefire was called on Christmas Eve and the surrender took place on Christmas Day at 3pm at Queen's Pier Hong Kong Island. The staff officers

attended and after the signing ceremony both the Governor and General Maltby were led away into Japanese captivity. The staff officers returned to the Battle Box to issue orders to British Forces to lay down their arms and report to the Murray Barracks within twenty-four hours for internment.

Captain Freddie Guest, one of the other junior staff officers said to my father that he had no intention of being captured by the Japanese. He had heard too much about Japanese cruelty and the rape of Nanjing. He was going to make a run for it and try to get to mainland China. He asked my father if he was coming too. My father said he would.

They decided to make for Aberdeen on the far side of the island; the harbour was



Japanese 228th Infantry Regiment entering Hong Kong, December 8th, 1941.
(Photo from: HMCS Prince Robert tribute site)

already under Japanese control. First, they decided to make a hazardous journey into the downtown district of Victoria. There they knew Republic of China Navy, Admiral Chan Chak, had his office in the Gloster Building. My father was his Liaison Officer with the General Staff and had been there several times before. They found a car and drove to the Gloster Building. Knocked quietly and were let in the door by Henry, the Admiral's Flat Lieutenant.

They quickly told the Admiral what had happened, namely the surrender and what they intended to do. Admiral Chan Chak was a fifty-year-old, one-legged Admiral who had earlier lost his right leg fighting the Japanese. He was very resourceful and in my view made the difference in the whole escape attempt between success and failure. When the two soldiers told the Admiral what they intended to do, his simple reply was, "We go now!" The Admiral knew, as did the two soldiers, what the Japanese would do to him if they caught him - a slow lingering death under torture.

We Go Now!

Finding a large car, Henry the Flat Lieutenant took the wheel, the Admiral sat in the front passenger seat. The others scrambled in the back with the Admiral's Chief of Staff, Colonel Yee, his coxswain and two soldiers. They met Japanese patrols in the crowded streets of Hong Kong, but were not stopped and made it to Aberdeen on the far side of the island. There they found one of the few vessels that was serviceable and afloat. The twenty-five-foot motor cutter that belonged to HMS Cornflour, one of the Hong Kong guard ships. They put fuel, food and water on board and found a volunteer crew. By the time they were ready to sail; there were fourteen or fifteen on board the small craft.

Admiral Chan, his two staff officers and coxswain, the two soldiers, an airman, two other staff officers, a policeman, two Special Operations Executive (SOE) agents, a young Danish coxswain and two or three sailors volunteered as crew. Before the surrender there had been a plan to get Admiral Chan and his staff out of the colony to mainland China; using the motor torpedo boats of the second flotilla; but the plan had collapsed in the chaos of the last few days. But I suspect the two staff officers were aware of that plan which in turn was why they headed to Aberdeen after the main harbour was lost to the Japanese. The second flotilla was based there.

Unaware that by now the Japanese had issued an order that no vessels were to leave the harbour until further notice and they were closing in on the Naval base. It was getting dark about 6pm. They decided to

One-legged Admiral Chan Chak (right).
(Kennedy Collection)



It badly wounded the Danish coxswain and hit Admiral Chan in the left wrist which in turn made swimming very difficult for him. Soon the boat was riddled with bullets and sinking. Everyone had to take to the water.

sail; heading for some nearby islands 500 or 600 yards off shore. But as they sailed a Japanese searchlight detected them and a machine gun opened fire! It badly wounded the Danish coxswain and hit Admiral Chan in the left wrist which in turn made swimming very difficult for him. Soon the boat was riddled with bullets and sinking. Everyone had to take to the water.

Admiral Chan Chak wrote in his journal:

"The Danish steer man was the first one shot, then the engineer. MacDougall and others were wounded. Most of the stray bullets had hit the boat and even some had hit my helmet.

Hsu was very wary about me the "One Foot Admiral of 50" swimming such a far distance. I insisted to carry my own gun and passport. Yeung could not swim and he suggested that we should go back to Hong Kong. "Going back means surrender. I would rather die!" I said. I took off my life preserver (which was the last one on board) and gave it to Yeung. As I raised my hand, a stray bullet went right through my left hand. Yeung didn't say anything anymore,

he just jumped into the sea, followed by MacDougall with his wounded back.

Yee Siu-Kee and 2 other British soldiers had to remain on the boat. Yee could not swim and the 2 soldiers were badly wounded. We were all sitting ducks in the water and non-stop bullets were flying everywhere. I finally swam ashore on the small island right next to Apliechau'.

My father told me years later that it was the worst swim of his life. It can be quite cold in Hong Kong at Christmas time. They were in the water for the best part of an hour before they made it to the nearby island that they had been heading to in the boat. Wet and cold, they carried out a quick reconnaissance; and there in the darkness they saw a silhouette of a British Motor Torpedo Boat (MTB).

Captain Freddie Guest, a good swimmer, volunteered to swim out to her and get help. As he was reaching the MTB he used some English swear words to alert the sentry to the fact that he was British. They hauled him on board, gave him some dry clothes and a tot of rum. He told them where to



The Third Peoples Hospital of Huizhou by the junction of BinJiang E Road and Huangjiatang Street. Back row: Supt. Bill Robinson, W.O. William M Wright, Admiral Chak is in the centre. Captain Peter MacMillan is standing back row third from the left, (Photo from the Ross family collection)

find the others on the island. They sent in their boat to collect them. The Commanding Officer called up on his radio for four other MTBs to join him at his position - all that was left of the Second Flotilla. The rest had been sunk by the Japanese.

Around midnight they were all gathered on board. The Commanding Officers held a quick conference with Admiral Chan Chak to decide where to go. The two soldiers had the latest intelligence on Japanese movements, which had come down the Pearl River from Canton down the main highway. The MTBs decided to head for Mear's Bay, north east of Hong Kong. There they expected to find no Japanese forces.

Sailing in company at high speed they met a Japanese destroyer, but she did not seem to see them. In the early hours of the morning they reached Ping Chow Island a mile and a half off the Chinese Mainland. Sending in a boat and capturing a Chinese fisherman, Admiral Chan Chak questioned him. The fisherman told the Admiral that

there were no Japanese on Ping Chow Island or on the mainland at Nanao.

The fisherman was returned to his hut with a bottle of rum for his pains. The MTBs then proceeded the short distance to Nanao. There they stripped the MTBs of all useable gear. What they needed for the march they kept for themselves. The rest they gave to the East River guerillas, a nationalist group that had been harrying the Japanese whenever they got the opportunity. They were immensely helpful to the escape party and provided them with guides and a party to carry the Admiral in a sedan-like chair lashed to two long bamboo poles.

The party marched by night and hid in barns by day for three days. On the fourth morning, they reached Waichow, a nationalist Chinese held town where a famous photograph was taken of Admiral Chan Chak and the sixty-seven others who escaped from Hong Kong. They then continued into the interior of China, passing through Canton in two motorised rice bares;

right under the noses of the Japanese.

When they came to a Welsh Medical Mission, Admiral Chan Chak had his left arm operated on and the bullet removed. There they left him in safety tucked up under clean white sheets. Later in 1942, the brave Chinese Admiral was awarded the KBE by King George IV.

Most of the party, the crews of the MTBs decided to head through Yunan Province and on to Rangoon in Burma. They reached that city with just enough time to be evacuated when the city surrendered to the Japanese in February 1942. Later most made it to India and home to the UK.

The two soldiers, the airman the policeman and the two SOE agents continued into the interior of China where they reached Quilin, on the Li River. There they found a Chinese Nationalist airfield and were flown to Chungking; the seat of the Chinese Nationalist Government. It was there my father and Freddie Guest reported to the British Ambassador. They were not



Emaciated internees at Santo Tomas Internment Center, Manila. February 1945. (Image: U.S. Army)



Children at the University of Santo Tomas internment camp right after liberation by U.S. forces, 1945. (Image: U.S. National Archives)

escaping prisoners of war but their evasion had covered some 1,200 miles. Later they met General Chiang Kai-Shek and his wife before flying over the Himalayas to India in a DC-3 and resumed their duties.

Camp Holmes Internment Camp (Camp #3 or Baguio Internment Camp)

While Peter was escaping from Hong Kong, Viola and Robert were in Baguio, under Japanese guard.

Most of our time in Baguio was boring, but we were 5,000ft up and had an equitable climate. It was hot by day but cool by night. Better still, mosquitos do not fly that high. The Japanese had not planned to capture enemy civilian prisoners so had no food to feed us. They robbed adults of money and valuables to pay for food to feed us. We basically had a bowl of rice in the morning and another in the evening. But I still love rice, after all it kept us alive.

In the summer of 1943, my mother fell ill. She needed her gall bladder removed. Doctor Vance, one of the camp American doctors performed the operation using a local aesthetic in her spine. Daphne Bird told me years later that my mother would have died without the lifesaving operation. I am glad I was too young to have known that then.

I remember clearly the following month, November, a long silver aeroplane overflowed the camp. On it were the American stars under its wings. It certainly raised our spirits; but we were slowly starving on our poor ration of rice.

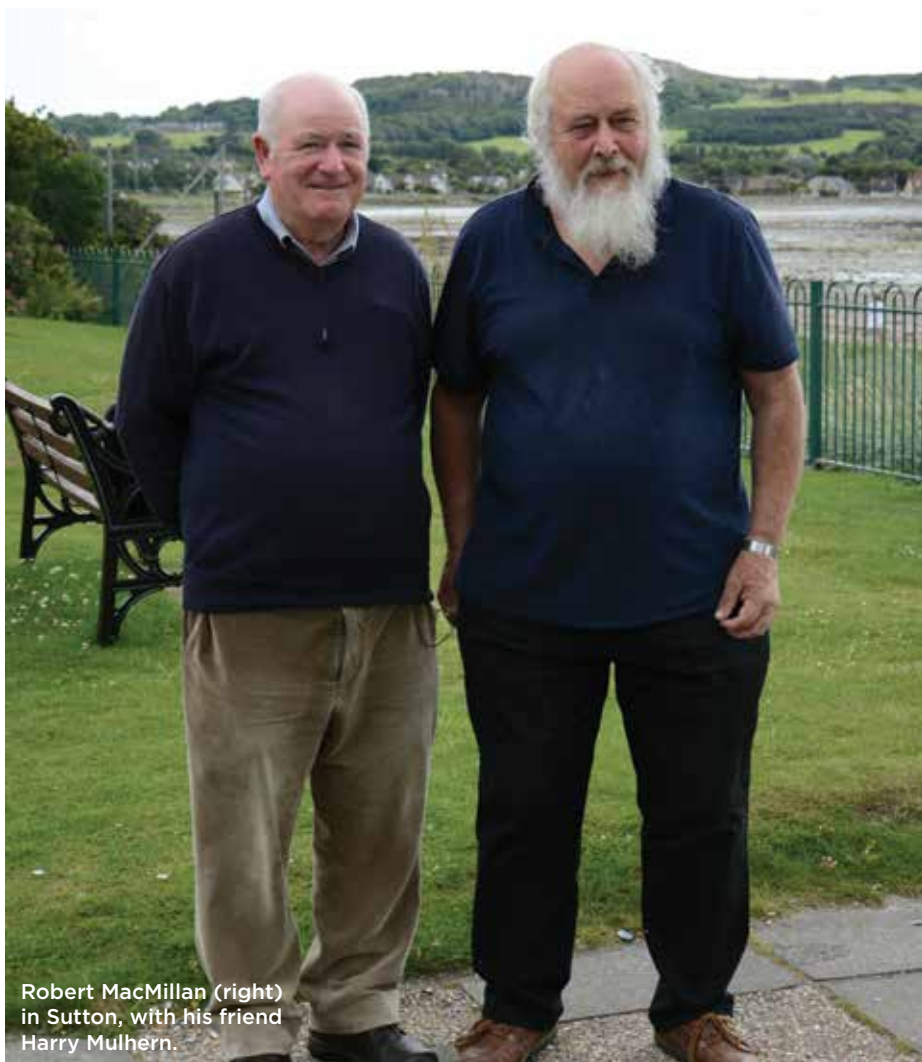
Then just before Christmas 1943, we received our one and only Red Cross parcel. We later found out the Japanese had stolen two others. It was the adults who were more excited than us children. We had never seen tins of fruit or spam before, so did not know what they were. I just remember pushing the large cardboard box with the Red Crosses upon it up the hill to the camp from the Distribution Hut in a toy wheel barrow that someone had made for Derek and me.

Then on April 4th, 1944, considered a very unlucky date by the Japanese, something to do with numbers, a bit like our Friday 13th, two of our young men escaped from the camp and joined the guerillas in the mountains. This caused the Japanese great loss of face. They took three prisoners from the camp who they thought knew the two escapees. All of them were brutally tortured to within an inch of their life. I for one will never understand the wanton cruelty of the Japanese to helpless civilian prisoners.

A secret radio, built by an American out of bits and pieces, gave us news of the progress of the war in the Pacific. The news was very carefully controlled. If the Japanese found the radio, people would have died. It was not until October 20th, 1944, when the U.S. landings in the Leyte Island in the south of the Philippines took place that any likelihood of our liberation could take place.

I remember clearly the following month, November, a long silver aeroplane overflowed the camp. On it were the American stars under its wings. It certainly raised our spirits; but we were slowly starving on our poor ration of rice. By then many Allied submarines were sinking many Japanese navy and supply ships. We were right at the bottom of the Japanese food chains. They did not give a fig for us.

The following month, December, gunfire was heard in the valley below the camp and on the coast ten miles away. We did not



Robert MacMillan (right) in Sutton, with his friend Harry Mulhern.

know it at the time, but it was the American landing, just where the Japanese had landed nearly three years before. Two days later all prisoners were informed by the Japanese that the camp was being moved; 60% the next night and 40% the night after. The Japanese would not tell us where we were going, but it was guessed that we were going to Manila. That proved to be correct.

There was a young calf in the camp that I used to let suck my fingers. It was turned into stew and issued with a ration of rice that we could take with us. We then boarded small Japanese lorries, perched on top of our things under a cargo net. A Korean guard on our truck gave his rifle to my mother to hold while he slept. He figured that she would be staying awake to keep an eye on me.

Down a zig zag trail, we travelled in

the heat and humidity of the lowlands, through the deserted villages on the Barrios. It took the best part of twenty-four hours to reach Manila. There we headed for the old Spanish gaol of Bilibid in the centre of the city. Bilibid contained the survivors of the Corregidor Island Garrison. There was only room for us because so many of them had died of their appalling treatment. In Bilibid 800 survived out of 4,000. I could see the white wooden crosses where several American POW's were buried having been murdered by the Japanese. You only went to the American built prisoner latrine if you really had to go. It stank! I can smell it to this very day.

The end came quickly. Fighting erupted all around the gaol on February 3rd, 1945; the Japanese announced that they were leaving but we were to stay where we were.

Were we free we thought to ourselves? No-one knew. The next day banging was heard on the big wooden gates of the old gaol. An American voice called out "say who's in there?" An American committee member replied "United States and allied prisoners, who are you?" The reply was electric! "United States Army, 37th Ohio Regiment".

Our liberation had come after 37 months! I will never forget those smart young soldiers in their fine green uniforms. They seemed ten feet tall to a five-year-old.

- After the war, Robert and his mother moved to be with friends in Ireland. Robert went on to join the Royal Navy, retiring as a Lieutenant Commander. Travelling back to Hong Kong, Robert retraced his father's escape route in 2009.
- After the escape from Hong Kong Captain Peter MacMillan, along with other staff officers left Kukong by truck for Nanxiong, an old walled town where there was an air strip. They flew out late that night, destination Chungking.
- The arrival in Chungking of Commander Hugh Montague Royal Navy (Retd), Police Superintendent Bill Robinson of the Indian Police Intelligence unit, Captain Peter Macmillan, Captain Reginald (Freddie) Guest, Squadron Leader Max Oxford, all staff officers of HKBHQ, David MacDougall, and Edwin (Ted) Ross both of the Ministry of Information arrival in the early hours made the British national and regional press the same day January 15th, 1942.
- Macmillan along with Commander Montague and Ted Ross flew out to Delhi via Calcutta on the January 28th, 1942. Staying at the Great Eastern Hotel in Calcutta. A few days later he was surprised to see a fellow escapee Captain Freddie Guest arrive there.
- He retired after 35 years' service on June 15th, 1965, with the rank of Colonel.

A Bell Huey in flight over Vietnam.
(Image U.S. Army)

The Sound of Vietnam

Bell UH-1H Iroquois 'Huey'

Today the Huey remains one of the most identifiable symbols of the Vietnam War and one of the most iconic helicopters worldwide.

Many Vietnam Veterans describe the Huey helicopter as the 'sound of our war'.

The Korean War highlighted the need for the U.S. Army to have a multi-purpose helicopter which could evacuate casualties from the frontline. This led Bell Helicopter to come up with the Model 204. On February 23rd, 1955, the Army announced that it had selected Bell to build three copies of the Model 204 for evaluation. The helicopter's designation was XH-40. Powered by a prototype Lycoming YT53-L-1 (LTC1B-1) engine producing 700shp (520kW), the XH-40 first flew on October 20th, 1956, at Fort Worth, Texas, with Bell's chief test pilot, Floyd Carlson.

Subsequent trials led to the HU-1, which incorporated changes to the original design such as a jet engine with 860shp and canvas seats to transport six people. Production of the first HU-1's began on June 30th, 1959, and completed in March 1961. The HU-1

was the first helicopter in U.S. military service that used a jet engine tuboshaft. A Lycoming T53, was installed above the fuselage and close to the main rotor unit, just behind the gearbox unit. This allowed a larger cargo hold and ability to transport more.

The pilot and co-pilot were seated together in the cockpit and had access to the interior through side doors. The large glass windowed cockpit design allowed for good visibility. The cargo area, or hold, was accessed by large sliding doors on the side of the craft. The tail beam inclined upwards with rectangular stabilisers in the central part and a small rotor at the end. The two skids made it possible to land in any kind of terrain.

In March 1960, the Army awarded Bell a production contract for 100 aircraft, which was designated as the HU-1A and officially named Iroquois. The helicopter quickly developed the nickname 'Huey' derived from the designation HU-1. Bell eventually began to cast the name on the aircraft. After September 1962, the designation

for all models was changed to UH-1 (Utility Helicopter) under a unified U.S. Department of Defense designation system.

Modifications were made as the various models evolved. The E model for example included modifications allowing it to operate from amphibious assault craft. The H model became the multi-role variant. The normal capacity of the H model made it possible to transport a dozen fully-equipped soldiers in reconfigurable canvas seats, stretchers or two tons of cargo in the hold. Using a sling system, it could also carry light vehicles or medium calibre artillery pieces.

The A model machines were the first to be sent to Vietnam as part of the Tactical Transportation Company which arrived at Saigon airport in Tan Son Nhut at the beginning of 1963. In Vietnam names, such as 'Slick' and 'Hog' were used to describe the troop and gunship variants respectively. A total of 4,869 helicopters were lost by U.S. forces in Vietnam. A total of 2,591 Huey's was lost; 1,211 in combat and 1,380 in operational accidents.

Bell Model UH-1H Iroquois 'Huey'

Specifications

Role:	Multipurpose utility helicopter
Manufacturer:	Bell Helicopter
Seating:	4 Crew, 10 Troops
Crew:	Pilot, Co-Pilot, Crew Chief and Gunner
Engine:	Lycoming T53-L-13 turbine
Engine Rating:	1400 SHP
Main Rotor:	2 Blade Semi-Rigid 48' Diameter 21"
Tail Rotor:	2 Blade Semi-Rigid 8' 6" Diameter 8.4" Chord
Internal Fuel:	209 Gallon Capacity
Maximum Gross Weight:	9500 Lbs
Empty Weight:	5210 Lbs
Typical Payload:	2200 Lbs (in addition to fuel and crew of 4)
Maximum Cruise Speed:	120 Knots
Maximum Endurance:	2.4 Hours
Cabin Volume:	220 Cu.Ft.
External Cargo Capacity:	4000 Lbs
Fuselage Length:	41' 11"
Height to Top of Rotor:	11' 9"
Width at Stabilizer Bar:	9' 13/32"
Climate Tolerance:	-65 Degrees F to + 65 Degrees F

Armament

Primary Armament:

Typical armament included two M60D machine guns on fixed door mounts manned by the Crew Chief on the left and a Door Gunner on the right. The M60D is a 7.62mm NATO caliber weapon with a cyclic rate of fire of 600 to 700 rounds per minute. The large cans below the M60's held roughly 2,000 rounds of linked 7.62mm ammunition and were a typical field modification replacing the authorised can which held 500 rounds.

Secondary Armament:

Each Crew Chief and Door Gunner also carried a secondary weapon, usually an M16 rifle. Pilots often carried other unauthorised weapons slung over their armoured seats for personal protection. Crew Chiefs and Door Gunners always carried coloured smoke grenades. These were used to mark targets for the Gunships when receiving hostile fire or to mark landing zones (LZ's).



Bell UH-1H 72 - 21509.
(Huey.co.uk)



The impact the helicopter had on a soldier's survival rate if wounded was unprecedented. In World War II and the Korean War, casualties could take days to be transported to rear echelon hospitals. In Vietnam, the Hueys transported over 90,000 patients alone (over half of them Americans). The average time between field wound to hospitalisation was less than one hour.

From an Irish perspective one air cavalry unit stands out. D Troop was formed in 1965 in Ft. Lewis, Washington, to provide air reconnaissance and rapid deployment capability to the U.S. Army's 1st Squadron, 10th Cavalry. D Troop deployed to Vietnam with the 4th Infantry Division in 1966, where the unit remained continuously engaged until its withdrawal in 1971. In honour of the unit's Irish roots, D Troop was nicknamed 'Shamrocks'.

There are three known Irish born helicopter pilots who served in Vietnam. John O'Sullivan from Tralee, Co. Kerry, Nick Collier from Bagenalstown, Co. Carlow, and William A Glennon from Mostrim, Co. Longford.

John O'Sullivan was a pilot with the 174th Aviation Company 'Dolphins and Sharks', 14th Aviation Battalion. He was one of the most highly decorated combat pilots in U.S. Army aviation history. His highest award he received was the Distinguished Service Cross.

'The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 9, 1918 (amended by act of July 25, 1963), takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross to Second Lieutenant (Infantry) John I. O'Sullivan, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with 174th Aviation Company, 14th Aviation Battalion, Americal Division. Second Lieutenant O'Sullivan distinguished himself while serving as fire team leader of a helicopter gunship team flying in support of allied operations near Quang Ngai. Although under a continuous hail of enemy automatic weapons fire, Lieutenant O'Sullivan led an aggressive attack on three companies of enemy soldiers that were entrenched in a Vietnamese village. Repeatedly exposing his aircraft to intense enemy automatic



weapons fire, he eliminated four enemy soldiers and destroyed two enemy bunkers. His aircraft was then shot down by intense enemy fire as he descended to a low altitude to provide cover fire for another downed friendly helicopter.

After surveying the damage to his downed ship, Lieutenant O'Sullivan returned to the cockpit and flew the crippled craft to a nearby air strip. He then obtained another gunship and returned to the area to take command of the fire team. While covering the recovery of the downed helicopter, he eliminated five more of the enemy. Responding to an urgent appeal for assistance from another allied unit, he again braved intense fire as he assaulted three enemy machine gun positions. During this encounter, his gunship was damaged by enemy fire. Undaunted, he continued his aggressive assault, destroyed the enemy machine gun positions, and completely routed the enemy force. Second Lieutenant O'Sullivan extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army'.

General Orders: Headquarters, U.S. Army, Vietnam, General Orders No. 3869 (August 21, 1970)

John passed away in 2013, from complications of illness contracted in Vietnam.

The Huey shown on our centre pages is Bell UH-1H 72 - 21509, restored and flown by Phil Connolly and his team at huey.co.uk This was manufactured by the Bell

Helicopter Company in 1972, and purchased by the U.S. Army in the same year and deployed to Vietnam serving with the 129th Assault Helicopter Company in Vietnam. Records show a total of 108 flights and 559 combat hours were flown, until it was returned to the U.S. in February 1973.

Restoration started in 2003. Up to that time 509 had been in storage at NW helicopters in Seattle, Washington, and had been used as a donor machine for other Hueys. The restoration work was carried out by Brian Reynolds and his excellent team of engineering staff.

Phil's team also fly another Vietnam veteran; a Hughes OH-6A Cayuse 'Loach'. The Hughes OH-6A was designed for use as a military scout during the Vietnam war to meet the U.S. Army's need for an extremely manoeuvrable light observation helicopter.

Bell UH-1H 72-21509 and Hughes OH-6A 69-16011 are available individually or as a team to attend airshows and events, as flying or static displays.
MSS Holdings UK Limited
Wesham House Farm
Fleetwood Road
Kirkham
Preston
Lancashire
PR4 3HD
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0)1772 687775
Web: www.huey.co.uk

On A War Footing

The Emergency Years (Part 2)

An interview with Lieutenant Colonel Ned Cusack (Retd)

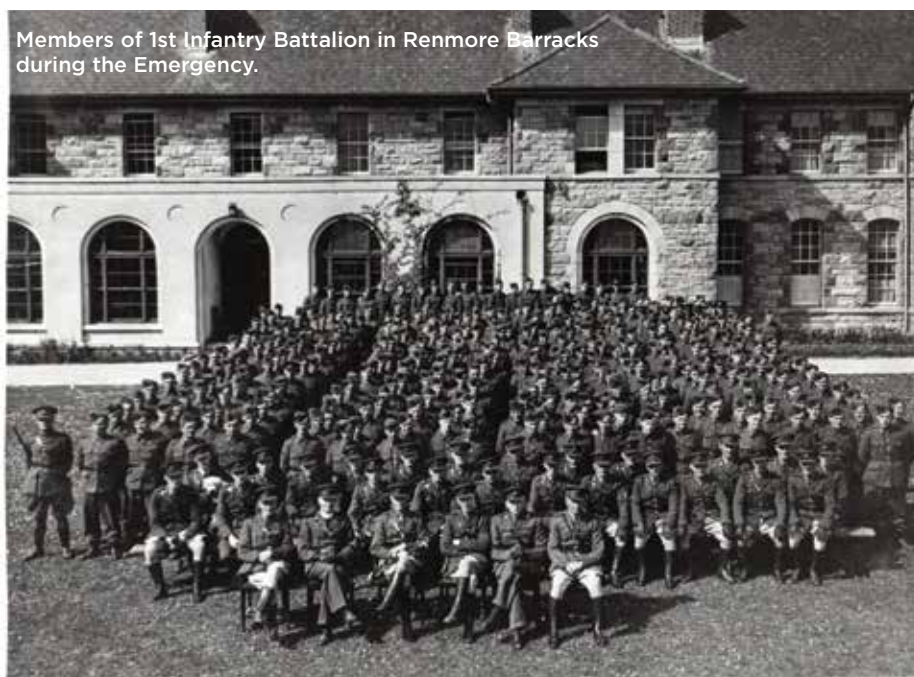
In our Winter issue, we spoke to Lieutenant Colonel Ned Cusack. Originally from Cork, Ned joined the Irish Defence Forces in 1938. A member of the 12th Cadet Class, Ned served at a time when Europe was at war. What lay in store for Ireland was uncertain. After the Irish government declared an Emergency, the Irish Defence Forces rapidly expanded. It not only had to defend the country from external belligerents but also from internal armed elements as well. Serving with the 1st Infantry Battalion in Galway, the first few months of the Emergency were intense for Ned and his comrades. Ned underwent exhaustive military training, deployment to the vital Look Out Post at Malin Head and the checkpoint at Drumsna bridge. Thinking he might get a rest over the Christmas the call came in "the IRA have raided the Magazine Fort". Ned continues his story.



Military parade in Eyre Square, Galway, 1943, where An Taoiseach Éamon de Valera, took the salute. Full turn out of the 1st Infantry Battalion in battle order - in pouring rain ! Ned is seen here leading D Company.



Two Irish soldiers during the Emergency. Note the pre-war uniform of the right hand soldier. (Image: Military Archives)



The Winter of 1939-1940

The raid by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) on December 23rd, 1939, brought the whole country to high alert. For all members of the Defence Forces, Christmas was over. A total of 1,084,000 rounds of ammunition had been taken from the fort and removed in thirteen lorries. Any subsequent campaign by the IRA had to be stopped before it could get off the ground. Raids were expected all over the country. The whole country was on lock down.

My company commander was Captain MacCole from Donegal. He was a 22 Warrior. He had served during the War of Independence, the Civil War, and then stayed on in the new Free State Army. He only had one leg after getting a bullet in his knee during his previous service if I remember correctly. He was summoned by the battalion commander and ordered to take his company to Athlone forthwith. His orders were to search the surrounding area of Athlone and the Midlands for the stolen ammunition.

Before I continue let me put into context the winter of 1939. It was the coldest in living memory and the coldest I have ever experienced. All of Europe was effected. The winter started off mild enough. The real cold spell came during the latter half of December 1939, when an anticyclone

brought frosts and fog at night. This carried on into January with frosts, blizzards, and heavy snowfalls. It was sub-zero every day. It was the coldest month on record since February 1895. The winds cut through you. Canals, lakes and even the sea froze. At times in January the temperature dropped to as low as -20C at night. The roads were so covered in ice we could not put transport on them.

As we couldn't use the roads we were marched down to the train station in

"1939 was the coldest in living memory and the coldest I have ever experienced."

Galway and transported by rail to the barracks in Athlone. The barracks as you know was later named Custume Barracks. It had not been properly occupied since the British pulled out in 1922. Only a small garrison kept guard there. As a result, the billets that were allocated for our lads were dire. They were damp, cold, unpainted. Absolutely miserable. Sure, they hadn't been occupied in nearly twenty years. The troops were issued with trestle beds on the floor and damp sheets, blankets and

mattresses. We ordered the lads to scavenge every bit of turf they could find and we laid down roaring fires in each billet. Now I mean roaring. You must remember this was at a time when turf was being rationed. We then hung up all the blankets, pillows and sheets to dry them out. The officers mess was a palace in comparison. I don't know how the lads survived. Surprisingly the food was very good.

We had a wonderful Company Sergeant called Sean O'Dwyer. The army knew him as "The Macin Dwyer" because he always addressed young soldiers "Macin come here I want you". As in my son or sonny. He later got a wartime commission and retired as a Commandant. Not only was he an outstanding NCO at that uncertain time, but all the other NCOs that I had the privilege of serving with were in a superior class and the country should be proud of their service.

By the first morning we were manning checkpoints and mounting guards at the radio transmitter at Moydrum, which was three miles from the barracks. To inspect the guard you had to cycle out to Moydrum at all hours during the day and night. Imagine an officer nowadays cycling out to inspect the guard. One night I got the call to report to Moydrum, there had been an incident. You have to remember this was still Christmas week and only a few days after

Ned commands the Guard of Honour at Dunsandle House, for Bishop of Clonfert, John Dignan.



Cadet Ned Cusack at Donnelly's Hollow - The Curragh Camp.



the raid in Dublin, so everyone was tense. In Moydrum the sentry on duty had heard rustling in the bushes. He had shouted "Halt Who Goes There". No one responded. He heard more movement this time getting closer and closer. He repeated the order to halt two more times. Taking no chances, he fired five rounds rapid fire. When I got there, we got out the torches and went out expecting to find a body. Well we found one, it was a bullock, shot right in the forehead. Ha ha, we laugh now, but the Department of Defence weren't laughing having to pay the farmer.

Each day our platoons were rotated around junctions and crossroads on every road in our area or responsibility. We got deployed as far as the border. All traffic was stopped and seriously searched. And I mean seriously. On New Year's Eve 1939, we were in Ballymahon, Co. Longford. It was bitterly cold. I was not a happy man. At least we had overcoats. There was a house and I think a pub beside where we had our checkpoint. The lights were on full and there was a party going on. As the clock hit midnight they all sang Auld Lang Syne. That's how we entered 1940, freezing cold listening to people singing and drinking tea and stronger. We all wanted to be somewhere else but that was the job we had to do.

Amongst all the cold and checkpoints there were some very funny memorable times too. In Monivea, Co. Galway, we were manning a checkpoint. There wasn't much traffic in this area except donkey carts. As dawn broke a ramshackle lorry approached us. I put up my hand to halt them. You could see the fear and apprehension in their faces. I ordered the lads to search the lorry. "Sir come here, look at this". I expected to find ammunition and rifles. Instead there was three big kegs. "Jesus", the man said,

"The raid also resulted in the opening of internment camps in the Curragh Camp."

"Please Sir, please don't confiscate them. These are full of Poitín for a wedding in Kinvara. I have to be there by 8 o'clock". "Off you go" I said "enjoy your wedding". In our minds myself and the checkpoint party were probably wishing that we could join the celebrations in Kinvara.

On another occasion one of our Connemara men was on a checkpoint when a man approached him. The sentry shouted "Stad! Cé tá ansin?" The man just kept coming. He repeated the order

twice. The man didn't flinch. The sentry shouted "Jesus if I had a stone you'd stop". Connemara men were famous for stone throwing. Remember the soldier had a loaded rifle in his hands!

As it turned out, the raid on the Magazine Fort was the worst thing the IRA could have done. Everyone had been watching what was going on in Europe. After the raid, there was a complete clamp down on all IRA activities and all known activists were rounded up. Between the Army and the Garda all the ammunition, plus a large sum of the IRA weapons and ammunition were recovered. The raid also resulted in the opening of internment camps in the Curragh Camp. Known as Tin Town, these camps held some 2,000 IRA prisoners during the war period. For the IRA, the raid on the Magazine Fort was a double-edged sword. For a few days, they had the Army's ammunition. But for the rest of the war most of their leadership was locked up and the clamp down effectively neutralised them for that period.

My 21st birthday was on March 1st, 1940. When you think of it we had done so much in that short period. On the evening of May 9th, German forces occupied Luxembourg, Belgium, and the Netherlands. France was next. The war in Europe had really begun. German troops pushed the Allies to the sea.



Conclusion of Army Retreat at Dunsandle Post ; when Bishop Dignan of Clonfert attended for the ceremony, Ned commanded the Guard of Honour.



Ned taking the field prior to important senior hurling game - 1943. Ned was a member of the Battalion hurling and Gaelic football teams.

On June 4th, the evacuation port of Dunkirk fell. France surrendered on June 17th. The Battle of Britain began a few weeks later in July. From our point of view, we didn't know what was going to happen next. Were we going to be invaded from the north by the British or from the sea by the Germans. On several occasions that year we were put on high alert expecting an invasion.

Romantic Interlude

It can well be imagined that during all this military activity that there was little time for contact with the civilian population. 24 hours each day were fully occupied with our army duties. Generally we were based well out of range of dance halls or cinemas. Transport was out unless one had a bicycle or you could walk there.

I wasn't the dancing type. I was a hurler, footballer, basketball player and angler. Fred Astair I was not. One evening back in Galway, a friend of mine and fellow officer, Eoin Curtin, having our evening meal together invited me to go dancing that night. He said, "We've had a rough time of it, I'm going to the hanger ballroom in Salthill tonight". God I couldn't dance, but against my better judgement I went.

Off we went. I took a seat on the sidelines to get a better view. Waltz's, Quick steps, slow steps, foxtrots. I'm out of here I thought. Now in those days you couldn't just walk up to a lady. You had to be introduced. Eileen said to a friend she wanted to be introduced to me. Instead she got introduced to Eoin Curtin "No, no, him"

and she pointed at me. There was a dance about to start and I was compelled to ask her for the next dance.

73 years and seven children later we are still happily together. We got married in 1944, but that's another story. Back to the war.

The Great Dispersal

In October 1940, regular army units were moved from existing barracks and the great dispersal was underway. Pre-war units, like the 1st Infantry Battalion, were considered elite units. As a precaution against air raids

"He said, "We've had a rough time of it, I'm going to the hanger ballroom in Salthill tonight". God I couldn't dance, but against my better judgement I went."

they were moved out of barracks into the countryside. Emergency units replaced the outgoing regulars. Throughout the country army units occupied old large estate homes and lands. The State rented them. In a lot of cases the lords of the manor or their sons were off fighting with the British.

We referred to Emergency units like the 24th Infantry Battalion as the "Shotgun Battalion" because they weren't as well

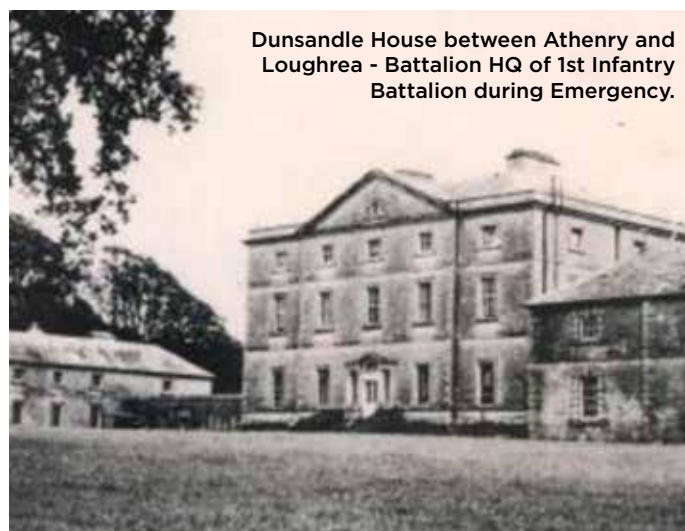
armed or trained. They were equipped with all our old equipment. They didn't like this term as they considered their units equal to any regular unit.

Our battalion took over the following country houses. Dunsandle House located between Lough Rea and Athenry became the Battalion Headquarters and attachments. A Company moved to Pallas House Tynagh. B Company were assigned to the Castle of Lough Cutra some miles from Gort town. Nearer the city was Kilcornan House, which became the home of C Company. While Castlehackett House near Tuam, housed smaller elements of the unit and some casual attachments from time to time. These houses were in a fair state of repair but were never built to house an army company of 150 men or more. One can visualise the problem of water supply and sewage disposal alone. The Army Engineers were a very efficient unit and they succeeded in converting these houses fit for occupation, and constructed timber huts each housing about 30 men. These huts were assembled in units at The Curragh Camp and transported around the country to various houses by army transport.

Every year during Lent the Army had to have a retreat. For ten days the Redemptorists came on the annual mission or retreat. In that era, the Catholic Church controlled the country; I am afraid that the Army did not escape. The retreat was concluded with a visit by the local Bishop to the barracks or post. These retreats were taken very very seriously. When the



Group of Officers taken outside the Officers Mess main door in Renmore, 1943. l to r Lieutenants, M.I. O'Toole, Ned Cusack, Captain Paddy Kearns, Donie Donovan, Paddy McGinley and Jim Griffin.



Dunsandle House between Athenry and Loughrea - Battalion HQ of 1st Infantry Battalion during Emergency.

Bishop of Clonfert, John Dignan, closed our first retreat in Dunsandle, I was in charge of the Guard of Honour. The local paper photographed the ceremony. The Bishop was a very kind man and asked me many questions about the Army because he was in almost total ignorance.

“We marched three miles when we came across a church. The company commander made a decision. The troops had to go to mass. Here we were in the middle of a wartime exercise, dropping everything to go to mass.”

Manoeuvres in Limerick

In the event of attack the 1st Infantry Battalion's primary objective was to defend Rineanna (Shannon airport) from airborne assault. If Shannon was attacked, we were to get there “the fastest with the mostest”. We were regularly exercised. Spontaneous alerts would come in: “Be at Shannon by first light”. You then had to move the entire battalion. As we only had two lorries per company, half the company would start marching while the other half were transported to Shannon. Then they'd come back and pick up those marching. It was the fastest way we could do it.

Once we got there we had to attack the enemy. The tactical thinking at the time was to attack the paratroopers quickly before they had time to dig in and secure the airfield. We spent days and nights attacking phantom enemies at Rineanna. We had great men. I never heard them grumbling. And we had plenty of grumbling situations.

In 1941, we had our first big exercise. County Limerick east of the Shannon and all that area was our Area of Operation. The enemy were made up of the Local Defence Force (LDF) and the Local Security

Force (LSF). Our orders were to cross the Shannon. All bridges across the River Shannon were on paper; blown up. The Marine Service provided two vessels to transport us across - the Fort Rannoch and the Muirchú. They steamed up the Shannon and took us on board.

It was a Sunday morning when we landed on the Limerick shore. We marched three miles when we came across a church. The company commander made a decision. The troops had to go to mass. Here we were in the middle of a wartime exercise, dropping everything to go to mass. As we'd all been on the go for days, once we hit the pews we all fell asleep with hunger and fatigue. You could hear the snoring all over the church. The priest carried on as if nothing was wrong. The local people all looking in the door at the Irish Army fast asleep. Can you imagine it.

Recollecting two funny incidents

Our road transport couldn't be shipped across the river Shannon. So they had to drive around via Limerick city with our field kitchen. This field kitchen can only be described as a prehistoric museum piece.

The cooks decided that they would do up a delicious stew for us to eat at the end of the manoeuvres. On the road to the bivouac area the driver took a bend too sharply and the field kitchen keeled over spilling the stew on the surface of the road. Nothing daunted the intrepid crew who got the fire shovel and quickly spooned the stew back into the pot of the field kitchen. The weary troops never tasted such a tasty meal that evening near Kilmallock. The LDF and LSF were exercising their medical detachments. Mock casualties were placed around the exercise area. People could be seen with signs saying ‘broken leg’, ‘severe bleeding’, ‘head wound’ and so on. In the evening after the exercise was over a lorry picked up the casualties. Well the lads got to one crossroads where they were meant to pick up a farmer acting as a casualty. On arrival there was no farmer. He had put up his sign on a timber gate and wrote on the reverse ‘Bled to death. Gone home to milk the cows’.


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Make sure and get our Summer issue to read part 3 of Ned's story. As the war escalated in Europe Ned got to meet some new visitors to Ireland. Crash-landed American crewmen.

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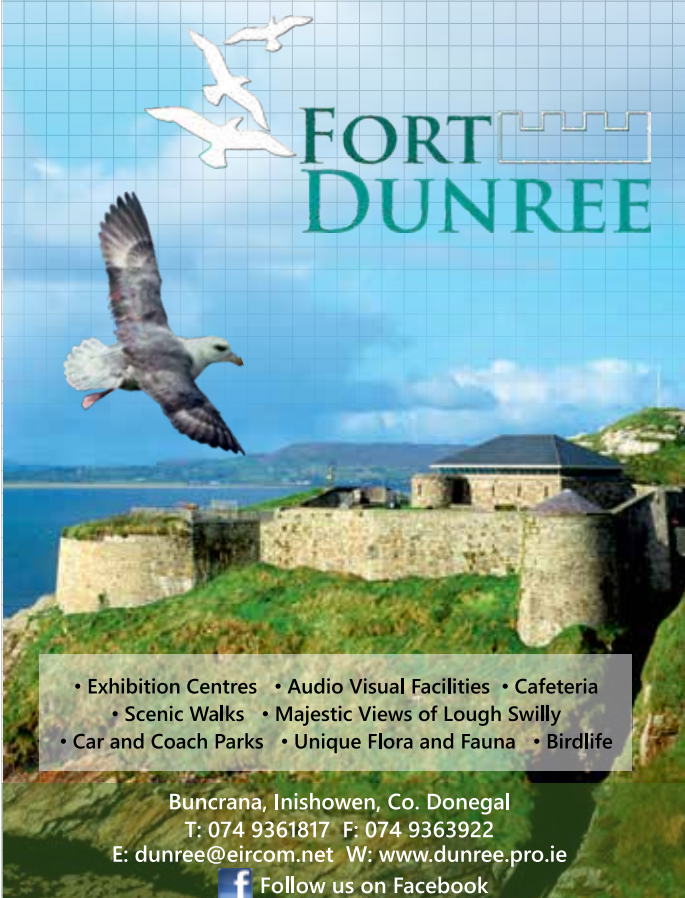
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Emergency Over Irish Skies

Part 2 - Air Defence Command

By AP (Tony) Kearns

Anti-Aircraft position at
Ringsend Park, Co. Dublin.
(Image: Military Archives)



A Heinkel III from I./KG27 which force landed in Waterford, April 1st, 1941.
(Image: Military Archives)



In our Winter issue, aviation historian Tony Kearns examined the Irish Air Corps efforts to defend Irish airspace in the initial months of the Emergency. Under equipped, the Air Corps patrolled Irish airspace as best they could. Air Corps aircraft was only one element of the air defence plan. Tony continues the story with the Air Defence Command. An all but forgotten unit of the Irish Air Corps.

Air Defence Command

Air Defence Command (ADC) was formed in 1939, at the same time as the Marine and Coastwatching Service, under the command of Major G. J. Carroll of the Air Corps. In addition, a sub unit of ADC was proposed, to be known as the Air Observer Corps (AOC). This unit was to be commanded by Commandant W. P. Delamere, a senior Air Corps officer and Great War veteran of the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Air Force (RAF).

In the initial plans submitted, the AOC would have received reports from the Marine and Coastwatching Service Look Out Posts (LOPs). It also proposed the establishment of additional Observer Posts to be located inland to track and report on the movements

of all flights. This Irish equivalent of the British Royal Observer Corps was not established and Commandant Delamere later assumed command of ADC. Initially, it was established at Portobello Barracks Dublin, moving to Dublin Castle after a short period and later to the Monastery at Clondalkin near Baldonnel.

The reporting of inland flights was undertaken by An Garda Síochána (the Irish police force) and by personnel of the various military posts. Commandant Delamere, as part of his appointment, visited RAF Fighter Command HQ at Bentley Priory where he renewed some acquaintances from his earlier flying career, including, Air Vice Marshal Richard Saul the brother of Paddy Saul of Atlantic flight fame. During this visit, he formed the opinion, from conversations, that the RAF had at its disposal, a system of advance warning of approaching enemy aircraft, but apart from confirming this, no other information was forthcoming, except for rather broad smiles. This of course was a reference to RADAR. Cooperation was ongoing with discussions taking place in London on improving Irish and British defence liaison.

An example of this cooperation exists

in the British National Archives at Kew. A document passed to the British Air Attaché in Dublin of a drawing to describe the Luftwaffe BV138 Seaplane which made a forced landing at the Blaskets, Co. Kerry, in November 1940. The British were anxious to verify its identity as the type had not been seen around the Irish coast previously. A note attached states: 'This was handed to me by Mulcahy'. It is unclear whether this is Colonel Mulcahy Officer Commanding Air Corps.

Integrating Air Defence Command

Originally, as part of our neutral policy, the ADC acting on reports from the LOPs and other sources, transmitted the known movements of all aircraft of the belligerents either over neutral territory or territorial waters in clear, from a transmitter located in Dublin. In March 1941, as part of the military liaison now in place with the British, Commandant Delamere paid a visit to Belfast to acquaint himself with the air defence system for the protection of Northern Ireland. The British confirmed qualified satisfaction with the arrangement of broadcasting the presence of aircraft, a

A 3.7-inch Anti-Aircraft gun crew at Ringsend, Co. Dublin.



Anti-Aircraft Listening Post.
(Image: Military Archives)



On September 6th, 1939, gun positions in Dublin were identified and later located at the Hibernian Schools, Baldonnel, Clontarf, Stillorgan and Sandycove.

policy that could only be to their advantage. The authorities there also expressed the aspiration, that perhaps, direct contact on the movement of German aircraft could be established. The Irish response was less flexible, and it was pointed out that to acquiesce to such a request would constitute an obvious breach of Ireland's ostensive neutral status as a sovereign state.

An air defence measure taken at the time was for Raidió Éireann, on occasions, to cease broadcasting to avoid its signal being used as a homing beacon. Had Raidió Éireann been broadcasting when Oblt. Kurt Mollenhauer (as related in conversation) was trying to obtain a fix on his location, his Focke Wulf FW-200 Condor may have avoided crashing on Faha Ridge in Co. Kerry on August 20th, 1940.

Intruding aircraft sightings were not reported directly to the Air Corps but rather through channels. When eventually notified, it was not possible to take any action due to time delay and it took some period to rectify and establish direct communication.

A prohibition order of flights over neutral Irish territory by the belligerents under

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REMEMBERING OUR PAST

Aughris Head LOP, March 1940.
(Image: National Archives)



Clogher Head LOP, Co. Louth, February 1940.
(Image: National Archives)



the Emergency Powers (Air Navigation) Order No.1 of 1939 came into effect on September 8th, 1939. This act also provided for the prohibition of civil flights over certain designated areas, including Dublin City. The order furthermore, restricted flights between sunrise and sunset. In effect flights by the belligerents were impossible to prevent but there were occasions of civil flights which had strayed outside the defined flight paths being intercepted and ordered to return to the correct flight paths.

The non-availability of any type of night-fighter aircraft also meant that the only means of warning off violating aircraft and general night defence rested with the anti-aircraft artillery units. The Artillery Corps however was even more depleted than the Air Corps. On September 6th, 1939, gun positions in Dublin were identified and later located at the Hibernian Schools, Baldonnel, Clontarf, Stillorgan and Sandycove. Searchlight and sound locator positions were similarly located at Clontarf, Howth, Pidgeon House and Dalkey. The situation had only slightly improved by June 1941, with air defences located at Collinstown (Dublin Airport), Clontarf, Ringsend, Stillorgan, Bull Wall, Sandycove, Ballyfermot and Baldonnel. The searchlights were now at Ballsbridge, Howth, Blackrock, Dalkey and Sandycove. The emplacements formed a token ring of protection around Dublin City as well as reporting air and sea movements and with the reporting from the LOPs, all information was to be assessed by the ADC.

Overcoming Problems

Some of the problems encountered centred around the elapsed time between the time

of the incident, the receipt of messages at Central Control, and the onward broadcasting of the information on the radio, often on a weak signal. After a visit to Northern Ireland, Commandant Delamere pointed out that the prime difficulty was the lack of suitable transmitters. This was to be almost immediately rectified by the delivery of four transmitters to Dublin. Colonel Delamere (ret'd) confirmed to this writer that he was not aware from whence they came, except that the four arrived at Army HQ. The British quickly agreed that the existing system was just as suitable and supplemented by the four transmitters, which were located at Clondalkin, Mallow, Limerick, and Athlone. These transmitters established nation-wide coverage.

The system of radio signals, which were also monitored by the RAF's Y service, (a highly-sophisticated radio intelligence network), contributed to the destruction of several Luftwaffe aircraft flying to the west of Britain. Apart from the RADAR directed intercepts, other interceptions were carried out because of standing fighter patrols and the monitoring of radio transmissions from the German reconnaissance and weather flights. Direction finding methods were employed which gave an accurate location of the aircraft.

The British RADAR (Chain Home) stations played a vital part in the battle against the Irish Sea anti-shipping sorties. Aircraft operating outside RADAR range off the Irish east, south and Atlantic coasts, were monitored by, (apart from Y Service), individual shipping, trawlers, convoys, and the LOPs whose combined transmissions

were co-ordinated and acted upon. Notwithstanding, interceptions in these areas and even RADAR assistance often proved to be, for the RAF, a hit and miss affair. There were notable exceptions. The task of preventing the lone German long-range flights from France completing their missions rested with fighter squadrons based in the western areas of England and Wales, the Isle of Man and Northern Ireland. As the RADAR improved so did its range. UK coverage extended to almost the whole of eastern Ireland, while half of neutral Ireland was reached by Northern Ireland based RADAR.

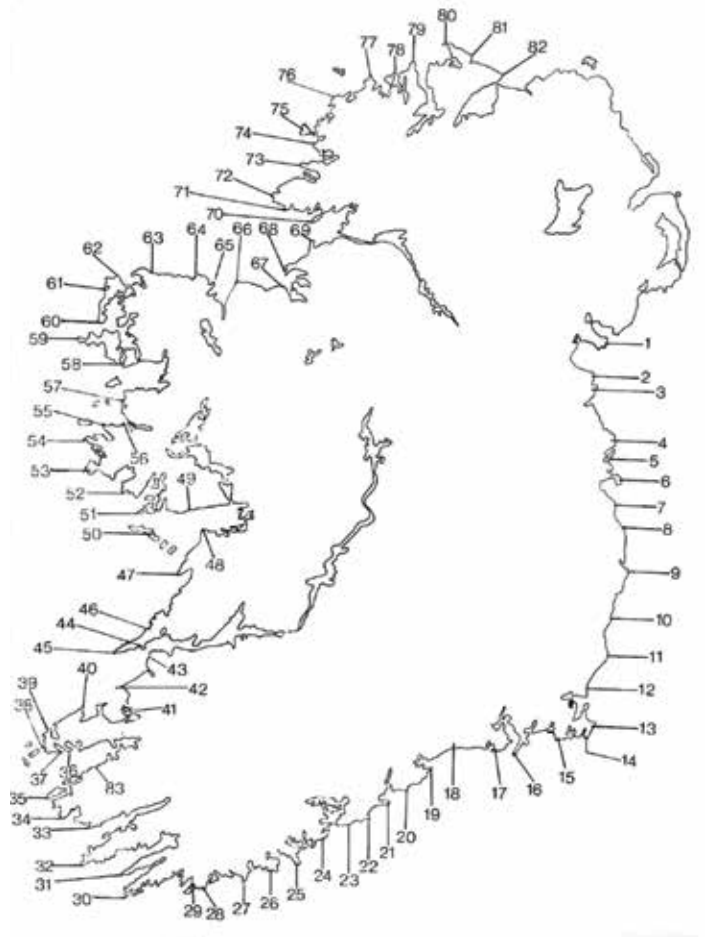
It has often been claimed that the British were not too concerned with attempting to intercept the long-range weather flights but in practice every effort was made to destroy them. The Luftwaffe Weatherman or 'Frog' as he was referred to, continuously radioed the information as he observed the weather readings. The weather flights also reported any convoys, and other shipping observed during their mission. Co-operation in the reporting of movements of aircraft by the ADC enabled the RAF to effect interceptions but clearly illustrates the inability of the Air Corps to protect its territory due to lack of suitable interceptors.

Tony Kearns has a life long interest in Irish Military Aviation history, particularly the Air Corps and the Emergency period including the Allied and German operations over and around neutral Ireland. He is a volunteer researcher at the Irish Air Corps Museum and Heritage Centre

Map of Marine & Coastwatching Service Look Out Posts Marine and Coast Watching Service

Look Out Posts

Ballagan Point	1	Doon Point	43
Dunany Point	2	Kilcreadaun Point	44
Clogher Head	3	Loop Head	45
Cardy Rocks	4	Kilkee -	46
Rush	5	Hags Head	47
Howth Head	6	Black Head	48
Dalkey	7	Spiddal	49
Bray Head	8	Kilronan	50
Wicklow Head	9	Golam Head	51
Kilmichael Point	10	Mace Head	52
Cahore Point	11	Doon Hill	53
Ballyconnigar Hill	12	Aughrus Point	54
Greenore Point	13	Renvyle Point	55
Carnsore Point	14	Rossroe	56
Forlorn Point	15	Roonagh Point	57
Hook Head	16	Corraun	58
Brownstown Head	17	Achill Head-	59
Dunabratton Head	18	Blacksod Point	60
Helvick Head	19	Annagh Head	61
Ram Head	20	Erris Head	62
Knockadoon Head	21	Portacloy	63
Ballycotton	22	Downpatrick Head	64
Power Head	23	Kilcummin Point	65
Flat Head	24	Lenadoon Point	66
Old Head Kinsale	25	Aughris Head	67
Seven Heads	26	Roskeeragh Point	68
Galley Head	27	Mullaghmore	69
Toe Head	28	St. Johns Point	70
Baltimore	29	Carrigan Head	71
Mizen Head	30	Rossan Point	72
Sheeps Head	31	Dunmore Head	73
Dursey Head	32	Crohy Head	74
Lambs Head	33	Arran Head	75
Bolus Head	34	Bloodyforeland	76
Bray Head	35	Horn Head	77
Eask	36	Melmore	78
Knockadowney	37	Fanad Head	79
Dunmore Head	38	Malin Head	80
Sybil Head	39	Glengad Head	81
Brandon Point	40	Inishowen Head	82
Fenit	41	Foiley	83 unnumbered
Kerry Head	42		



Dursey Head LOP was relocated from the Island to a new position on Ballincarriga Hill on the mainland. At least three other Posts were located at Foileye, (S.W. Dingle Bay), Parkmore Point (near Ventry) and another position located in Smerwick Harbour, North East of Sybil Head. They do not appear to have been allocated numbers except Foileye, which was given the identity No. 83. Part of the original structure included other locations, some subsequently dropped, their numbers were reallocated. Others which were retained had their numbers changed to those listed as shown on the map.

A vintage photograph of a man in military uniform standing in front of a large military aircraft in a field. The man is wearing a green short-sleeved shirt, dark trousers, a green beret, and sunglasses. He is standing in a field of tall, dry grass. Behind him is a large, dark-colored military aircraft, possibly a C-130 Hercules, with its tail fin and wings visible. The sky is a pale, hazy blue.

Reflections From My Time In Vietnam

Senior Master Sergeant Michael Noone, United States Air Force (Retd), tells his story

I am the eldest of ten children. Born to Pat and Aggie Noone in the townland of Cornagrea, Co. Roscommon. My father was a farmer and builder. I'd always wanted to be a soldier. I remember clearly, back in 1941, the day when the Irish Army pulled up outside our farm looking for water. My mother was churning and offered them buttermilk. In technical school I studied carpentry. There was no work in Ireland at the time and in 1956, I headed over to England and worked my trade. It was not long before I thought of America. After getting a sponsor and filling out all the paperwork I was on my way to Toledo, Ohio. It was June 1957, two days before my twentieth birthday. As part of the emigration process you had to sign a document stating you were eligible for the draft. I was classified as 1A: ready to be drafted.

America

Work in America was not easy to get either. I worked in construction in housing estates, but I couldn't get into the carpentry union. In the winter, everything stopped because of the freezing cold. Working in a hardware store I went to the local recruitment office and looked at all my options. There was an Air Force recruiter in the digs and he encouraged me to join them. My sponsor's two sons were in the Marine Corps and he wanted me to enlist with them. I took the tests for all the services. On the Air Force exam, I scored high on mechanics and electronics. This appealed to me. Thinking nothing of it I went back to work.

◀Left: Michael standing in front of a crashed Douglas AC-47 Spooky (also nicknamed “Puff, the Magic Dragon”).



Picture of three Boyle men in Vietnam. l-r: Sergeant Gerry Dignam, Captain (Chaplin) Patrick Feely, and Technical Sergeant Michael Noone.

The United States Air Force

One day in May 1958, the Air Force gave me a call. “Could you be at the bus depot this afternoon for Cleveland?”. Before I knew it, I was in Cleveland and swearing the Oath of Enlistment. Air Force basic training took place at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas. Now, I was green. Very green. I had some military experience having served in my local reserve unit from 1954 – 1956. The Boyle FCÁ Battalion however, was not the United States Air Force (USAF).

We were standing there ready to be issued uniforms. A TI (Training Instructor) came up to one of the guys in line and shouted “What is so funny Herman”. I thought, wow, there’s a guy in our platoon and he knows the TI. A little bit later someone else was talking in the ranks and the TI went over to him and called him Herman too. Two guys called Herman. What are the chances.

I did not know in the Air Force that private soldiers were called Airman. But they said it so fast it sounded like Herman. “Pick your bags up. Left Face! Forward March! I was at

the front. I sped off at the speed we’d march in the FCÁ. The TI ran up beside me. “Heh boy! where you going? Halt! Get to the end of the line”. The Americans march slower than we do here. It’s all funny now.

Basic training was about six weeks. It was much easier than what the Marine Corps or Army guys would go through. Mind you an overnight bivouac in Texas heat is something I remember. Texas gets very hot. At the time, I was still a pioneer. One night we were on a march and I saw a sign on the highway - Lone Star Beer. I promised myself one at the first chance. I have to admit, I was disappointed.

To be a pilot in the USAF you needed to be a citizen of the United States. So, I had my heart set on becoming a mechanic. This was not meant to be either. Called into the office I was informed I was slightly colour blind. This was news to me. It was a six-month administration course for me. As a carpenter this was a let-down.

After training you filled out what was commonly referred to as a Dream Sheet. In

the U.S. military, you move around a lot. I put down places like California, England, Germany and Japan. On January 1st, 1959, they sent me to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. This was Major Air Command who were responsible for procurement. I worked hard and it was not long before I got my second stripe.

In 1960, I deployed to France. I bought a Triumph TR4 for \$2,168. I drove to Ireland and met my future wife, Margaret, at a dance in Boyle. In 1963, I got married and I received a transfer to the U.S. Air Force base at RAF Alconbury. I was there for an uneventful three years. I have plenty of Cold War stories from my time in Europe and elsewhere, but that’s for another day.

My next post in America was Ent, Colorado Springs. Now with two children I bought a house with a view looking at Pikes Peak and Broadmoor ski area. By now I was a Sergeant. I was in Colorado for five years when I received my next posting - Charleston Air Force Station, Maine. Where was that? I thought. We did not take to Maine. I had



to travel 25 miles every day from Dow Air Force Base. Christmas Day 1970, there was six foot of snow. It was time to look at my options.

However, I had two long overseas tours, but no short tours. There weren't many options, Thule Air Base in Greenland, Johnston Island in the Pacific, two or three places in Alaska. All the options were in very harsh environments. Thule was located 750 miles north of the Arctic Circle. I had done a temporary duty there previously. I applied. Later that summer I received orders for Vietnam. Packing my family off to Roscommon I was off on September 30th. By this time I was a Technical Sergeant.

Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV)

The trip took me from Travis Air Force Base San Francisco to Hawaii, Wake Island, the Philippines, and then Saigon. The heat and smells were the first things that hit you. What

struck me first was young Vietnamese men of military age hanging around. Why am I here? The South Vietnamese had a system whereby they did two years' service and that was it. Not the way to win a war I thought.

In Saigon the new arrivals were given a culture brief. For example, you don't say come here gesturing with your hand up. You use your hand down. Gesturing with your hand up is an insult in Vietnam. I was issued five uniforms, a poncho, helmet, three pairs of boots, an M16 rifle, a bandolier with 20 magazines of ammunition. I still have my helmet and boots.

I was assigned to MACV. My job was an advisor to the South Vietnam Air Force, referred to as VNAF. I flew down to Binh Thuy, VNAF Headquarters, in a de Havilland Canada DHC-7 Caribou. To avoid ground fire, landings and take offs were straight up and straight down.

Binh Thuy on the Mekong river delta, was full of all sorts of VNAF aircraft. Primarily

helicopters and Cessna A-37 Dragonfly light attack aircraft. There were around 40 advisors there. We were all middle ranking NCOs and officers. Our Colonel was Bob Sowers from Arizona. There were also civilian contractors on the base from the likes of Boeing, Bell Helicopters, Cessna, and Lycoming.

For the most part VNAF was structured and operated the same as the USAF. They did however, do things differently. For example, the Vietnamese would take the phones off the hook and sleep for two hours during the day. The Vietnamese were very nice and very friendly. My Vietnamese counterpart was Major Tan. Our main job was to assist them in running their air force. Every advisor was also tasked with keeping a dossier on their VNAF counterpart. You had to look out for anyone that indicated they sympathised with the enemy. If the base was attacked one of us had to destroy the files which were kept in a safe with an incendiary grenade.

We lived in small huts called a Hooch, with a bunker to the rear. I was only there two or three days when a rocket attack came in during the night. "BOOM!". The NCO in my Hooch told me to get under my bed. Charlie (Viet Cong (VC)) would send in two or three rockets and then disappear. The other thing you had to get used to was the sentry helicopter. A gun ship flew around our base, the U.S. Navy and Army bases beside us. Once a rocket went off the gunship would be on them. But Charlie was gone the minute the rockets were fired. This became the norm. On one occasion I was in the middle of recording a message home when an unmerciful explosion erupted. A rocket had hit the ammunition dump in the base beside us and it had gone up. For seventeen hours' ordnance continued to explode and fire in every direction. The exploding ordnance meant the sentry helicopter could not fly and Charlie could continue firing their rockets unmolested.

Our food was great. Colonel Sowers had arranged for the Army Quartermaster Sergeant, who we got our rations off, to be given a Hooch. He had been previously in a billet full of grunts in the base beside us. We regularly ate steak and lobster. Where would you get it.

You learnt to adopt to Vietnam very quickly. On one occasion, we were doing a run to a nearby village. A local there made plaques for us. All these kids came up to us. The NCO that was with me said "don't let them touch you. Hit them with your rifle". I looked at him as if he was mad. Within seconds my new prescription sun glasses were gone off my head. These were not kids he explained, they were known as cowboys; older teenagers dressed as kids. They could tell I was new with my new clean uniform.

There were times when we'd be told it was Condition Yellow. This meant intelligence had reports that Charlie was reported seen in the area and to expect an attack that night. If you were leaving base you had to be with an armed escort; known as providing shotgun. One time we were bringing a guy to fly out at C  n Tho, three miles downriver on the south side of the river. While there an Air Force Major came up to me and said "are you from Binh Thuy". Recognising the name I said "Major we weren't expecting you till



Michael served with several Irishmen in Vietnam. This photo shows two chaplains, Fr. Mennis (USAF) from Co. Meath, Fr. O'Sullivan (U.S. Army) from Co. Limerick. The man on the right is a U.S. Army nurse.

tomorrow. You need a lift". I hit up the PX (Postal Exchange) for four crates of Carling Black Label beer. A container had fallen into the Mekong and crates were selling at \$0.25 each. A four-crate minimum came with a warning note not to drink out of the cans.

We were not far from our base when we saw two guys in black running towards the road. They were VC. South Vietnamese soldiers were chasing them. As the road was full of locals the South Vietnamese were shooting in the air. I said to the driver to stop the truck. The two VC split and one ran towards me. I levelled my rifle at him and shouted "  ng l  i" (stop in Vietnamese). He stopped, put his hands on his head and lay down. I shouted at the Major to search him. I said "be careful, he may have something strapped to him". He was clear. The South Vietnamese came over. The Major wanted to keep the prisoner but we had to hand him over. As they took the prisoner away he had this look of "thanks, I've five hours to live". As this was taking place the soldiers had got the other VC who went across the road. They put a magazine into him. As it turned out the VC were saboteurs trying to enter the base.

Trips up to Saigon were very regular to sort out admin. You could either get a U.S. or VNAF scheduled flight or a take a lift with a crew heading in that direction if they'd take you. You often ended up on an Air America flight. One time I got a lift with a

U.S. Navy chopper. I looked out and thought this doesn't look familiar. I asked the Navy SEAL beside me where are we going. He said "just a little detour". That detour found me in Cambodia. We landed and I was told I'd have to spend the night as the weather was coming in. All the SEALs in the camp had beards and were living with the natives. No steak and lobsters in this camp. They gave me a bunk and a mosquito net and told me to expect an attack that night. None came thank God. The natives in this area were Montagnard tribespeople. The special forces guys worked closely with them. The Vietnamese themselves regarded them as hillbillies.

On another occasion, I was travelling back from Saigon on a South Vietnamese gunship. While we were waiting for the chopper to take off a truck pulled up with some 22 women, kids and pigs, and started boarding. I thought I'd better get on and sat in beside the gunner. During the flight the gunner suddenly opened-up. Hot brass sprayed all over me. I thought what is this guy doing? Then I could see puffs of smoke above us and below us. "Oh shit, tracer!" You could hear the ping as rounds hit the helicopter.

Instead of getting "Out of Dodge" the pilot decided to turn into the fire and started pouring rockets into the enemy position. He did one pass and got out of there. As he pulled up A-37's came in and clobbered

Senior Master Sergeant Michal Noone (Retd) at his home in Leitrim. U.S. military veterans are encouraged to keep and wear their uniforms at ceremonial functions. A badge indicates the person is retired.



the area. When we landed, the Vietnamese civilians got out and started counting all the holes in the helicopter.

Although we were on a base the realities of the Vietnam War came to us. One day the Colonel asked for volunteers to help the VNAF choppers coming in. They were full of Army of Republic of Vietnam soldiers that were killed in action. The Huey's were loaded with bodies with missing arms, legs, heads. Stretches (litters) were piled with various body parts. I still think about it today.

R&R

I came home on R&R half way through my tour. If you wanted you could go to Hong Kong, Bangkok, Hawaii places like that. With seven days leave on top of my seven days R&R I bought a ticket for \$1,000 to London from Bangkok. I surprised my family back in Ireland. On the way home I flew with Pakistan International Airways on May 30th, 1972. When we landed in

Beirut an announcement said all shutters were to be closed and we were not allowed look outside. We sat there for around half an hour. Then the pilot told us we were not disembarking and we were taking off for Karachi. People who wanted to get off in Beirut went mad. The next day in Karachi I read in the papers that as we were landing in Beirut, there had been a terrorist attack in which three members of the Japanese Red Army recruited by the Palestinian group called the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-External Operations, attacked Lod airport (now Ben Gurion International Airport) near Tel Aviv, killing 26 people and injuring 80 others. The Lebanese authorities had expected a retaliation strike on Beirut airport and had ordered all aircraft to leave immediately. Scary stuff, but we didn't know this at the time.

Colonel Sowers was killed a few weeks later piloting a helicopter. Before Colonel Sowers death he recommended Michael for a Bronze Star Medal with Valor for an

incident that took place at Binh Tuay.

When I left Vietnam in October 1972, I travelled on a C-141 (Known as the Freedom Bird) via Europe. My wife and brother were at Dublin to meet me and on the way home I fell asleep on my wife's lap. As we passed over the Shannon Bridge at Drumsna, which was under repair and covered with heavy planks of wood, I reacted to the thunk, thunk, thunk by trying to crawl under the back seat of the car. It took years to outlive some of the Vietnam experiences. Unusual noises would cause a response as wanting to shout, "INCOMING!" or "TAKE COVER!".

Michael retired from the United States Air Force in 1986. Sadly, his wife Margaret passed away the following year and is buried in San Antonio military cemetery in Texas. Michael lives today along the banks of the River Shannon with his wife Freida in Jamestown, Co. Leitrim. Michael has many more stories from his time in the U.S. Air Force. Keep an eye out in future issues.



U.S. Navy, Oiler Michael
Gibbons' Medal of Honor.

Send The Word, Over There, that the Yanks Are Coming

Images courtesy of Ron Howko

After America declared war on the German Empire in April 1917, patriotic fever swept the nation. George M. Cohan wrote the song 'Over There' and it became very popular with American troops in France. Thousands would never return. An unknown number of American soldiers in World War I were Irish born. Following the war the veterans of the American Expeditionary Force formed The American Legion, in Paris, France, on March 16th, 1919. Today American Armed Forces veterans in Ireland research, honour, and

remember those men and women who went before them.

We spoke to Ron Howko, Commander of Post IR - 03, about the American Legion here in Ireland. Ron is a retired U.S. Army Master Sergeant. 'I didn't know much about the American Legion after retiring in October 1996', Ron explained, 'When I came to Mayo with my Irish wife Helen, I contacted the American Embassy and they put me in touch with Post IR - 03'.

There are four American Legion posts in Ireland: Fr. Frances Duffy Post IR-02,

Killarney, Co. Kerry; Commodore John Barry Post IR - 03, Claremorris, Co. Mayo; John F. Kennedy Post IR - 63, Dublin; and Pride of Éire Post IR-01, Dublin. The members (or Legionaries) are retired men and women who have served in the United States Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, Navy, National Guard, or Coast Guard. The majority left Ireland in their youth looking for work and either voluntarily enlisted to serve in the Armed Forces of their new home or were drafted. At a post meeting, you will meet Legionaries who have served in World War II,



Members of the American Legion, IUNVA and ONE as they honour four members of the ONE that served with the U.S. forces in the Congo. Moore House, Boyle, Co. Roscommon.

Korea, Vietnam, the Cold War, the Gulf War, or Operation Enduring Freedom.

Post IR - 03 was founded just after the Korean War in 1957. Post members meet twice a year, first weekend of April and October with its AGM. All the Posts come together each year for Thanksgiving dinner and to march proudly in the St. Patrick's day parade in Killarney

'After I had lived here in Ireland for a few years and served with the Post's Burial Honour Guard, I realised what sacrifices all these brave Irish men and women had made for an adopted country for well over 240 years', reflected Ron, 'The Irish have been part of the U.S. Armed Forces since the era of General George Washington. Their sacrifice should not be forgotten'.

As part of his duties as Post Commander, Ron researched and developed a presentation that tells the story of the Irish in American service and beyond. It is incredible to think that it was John Barry, born in Ballysampsion, Co. Wexford, in 1745, who became a famous Commodore in the U.S. Navy. Or Brigadier

It is incredible to think that it was John Barry, born in Ballysampsion, Co. Wexford, in 1745, who became a famous Commodore in the U.S. Navy. Or Brigadier General Michael Corcoran, born in 1827, in Ballymote, Co. Sligo, who went on to lead one of the most famous units in the American Civil War.

General Michael Corcoran, born in 1827, in Ballymote, Co. Sligo, who went on to lead one of the most famous units in the American Civil War. Michael was the commander of the New York volunteer unit the 'Fighting Irish' 69th Infantry Regiment. Or the story of

Captain Edward Doherty who was born on September 26th, 1838, in Wickham, Canada East, to immigrant parents from Sligo. It was Doherty who led a detachment of New York Cavalry on April 26th, 1865, that captured John Wilks Booth, President Abraham Lincoln's assassin.

People are always taken aback when Ron tells them, 'have you ever heard of the two Irish men who were the founding fathers of two South American navies'. These men of course are none other than Admiral William Brown, born in Foxford, Co. Mayo, in 1777, and Admiral Peter Cambell, born in Tipperary in 1780. These men helped form the Argentinian and Uruguayan navies respectively.

Irish who served in the U.S. military and their descendants, are famous around the world for their military service, legendary bravery, exploits, or status as world leaders. Many paid the ultimate sacrifice. Others went above and beyond the call of duty. 253 Irish men have received 258 Medals of Honor – the United States highest award



Mayo Peace Park Garden of Remembrance, Founding Stone, Castlebar, Co. Mayo.



Flint, Michigan native, Commander Ron Howko, speaking to the Admiral William Brown society in Foxford, Co. Mayo; birth town of the Admiral.

for bravery. Of the 19 two time recipients, five are Irish and three others are of Irish extraction.

‘One of my most proud moments during my time as Commander is at veteran’s funerals. Our post forms an Honour Guard at gravesides’, Ron told us, ‘we fold the U.S. burial flag and as Commander I reserve the right to present the folded flag on behalf of the people of a grateful nation in America to the next of kin’.

The American Legion have undertaken a project to honour former U.S. servicemen buried here in Ireland who have been long forgotten. Some came home never speaking of their service. Many Irishmen who fought in World War I or World War II, died or were killed in service. Initially buried in a U.S. military cemetery, their families were given the option to have the remains brought back to Ireland. In both cases, some of these men were buried in unmarked graves or simply forgotten about.

One such veteran who was forgotten about was U.S. Navy Medal of Honor recipient,

Oiler Michael Gibbons. Born on November 15th, 1866, in Mayo, he later emigrated and joined the U.S. Navy. During the Spanish–American War he served aboard the USS Nashville as an oiler. For actions during the conflict he received the Medal of Honor.

Medal of Honor Citation

Rank and organization: Oiler, U.S. Navy.

Born: Ireland.

Accredited to: New York. G.O.

No.: 521, 7 July 1899.

Citation:

On board the U.S.S. Nashville during the operation of cutting the cable leading from Cienfuegos, Cuba, 11 May 1898. Facing the heavy fire of the enemy, Gibbons set an example of extraordinary bravery and coolness throughout this action.

After being discharged from the US Navy he lived for a while in Portsmouth, Virginia and after living in the U.S. for 35 years he returned to Ireland. He died at his home in 1932. Until 1999, he was buried in an unmarked grave in Old Kilmeena Cemetery

Kilmeena, Co. Mayo. Thanks to the help of the American Legion he is now remembered and his grave has been rededicated.

Since 2012, twelve burial flags have been presented to the next of kin of Irish men that fought in World War I. Eleven were killed in action and buried in a U.S. military cemetery in France. The families of the veterans requested that their loved ones be brought back to home soil in Ireland in 1921. Because of Ireland’s political turmoil during the 1920’s the veterans never got a proper military burial, and in a lot of cases were forgotten. Thanks to a few hard-working volunteers at the Mayo Peace Park Garden of Remembrance in Castlebar, Co. Mayo and military genealogist in Dixon, Illinois, by the name of Pat Gorman, the memory of these veterans has not been forgotten.

‘We know that in Dublin harbour on May 1921 alone, about 35 coffins arrived from cemeteries in France. At the time a U.S. Grave Registration Team escorted them’, Ron told us, ‘Some years ago an article appeared in the local Western People about

American Legion Post-03 post meeting. r-l: Dr. Jerry P.Solan (Chaplin), Michael Slyman (Sergeant At Arms), Commander Ron Howko, and Adjutant Michael Noone.



the American Legion presenting a burial flag at a cemetery in Kiltimagh for a World War I veteran. One by one people started contacting us'.

Ron told us that for families the research and ceremony can be very emotional. On one occasion a Great Granddaughter of a John O'Donnell came to him. All they knew was that their Great Grandfather had emigrated and joined the U.S. military prior to World War I. They believed they were looking for a Robert or Seán. For a while Pat Gorman could find no records. After a little more digging through records by the family they found the name John. Within 24 hours Pat had found him in a grave in France. For over 90 years the family never knew what had happened to their Great Grandfather.

The American Legion arrange for a headstone to be erected if needed. At least one member of the Burial Honour Guard should be of the same service as the deceased veteran if possible. As well as

the U.S. flag the next of kin are presented with a Presidential Memorial Certificate. A Presidential Memorial Certificate is an engraved paper certificate, signed by the current President, to honour the memory of honourably discharged deceased veterans.

Ron added: 'I'm sure there are more forgotten veterans that are buried in Ireland without a proper U.S. grave marker. If so just contact the American Legion and we will do our best to research the veteran and see what they are entitled too'.

You can see and meet American Legion members at a ceremony to honour Co. Mayo, Vietnam hero, Patrick Gallagher, on March 30th. Patrick was the second-eldest of nine children born to Mary and Peter Gallagher. They lived at Derrintogher, three miles from Ballyhaunis. When he was 18, Patrick left home and emigrated to his aunts' home on Long Island in New York, and began to build his new life in America.

After joining the U.S. Marine Corps

Patrick was deployed to Vietnam. In July 1966, while other members of his unit slept, enemy fighters infiltrated his camp, and on approaching his unit's position they threw grenades in on top of his squad. Corporal Gallagher bravely threw himself on the grenade, which thankfully did not go off. He was later awarded the Navy Cross for Bravery. Sadly, he was killed in action before returning home. There is currently a petition to name a new U.S. Navy destroyer after him.

As the American Legion prepares for its centenary celebrations, it still stands true to god and country and traditional American values; strong national security; adequate and compassionate care for veterans, their widows and orphans; community service, and the wholesome development of America's youth.

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For more information on the American Legion in Ireland please contact:

www.americanlegion-ireland.com

Bishops Palace



Bishop's Palace – Treasures of Waterford

Photos by Ken Mooney

Waterford city boasts the finest collection of 18th Century architecture of any city in Ireland outside of Dublin. Its great legacy from this era includes elegant architecture, silverware and of course, fine glassmaking. This period of elegance began in Waterford in 1741 when the Anglo-German architect Richard Cassels (who anglicised his name to Castle) designed the beautiful Bishop's Palace.

The present Palace, built on the site of several previous palaces on Cathedral Square, was commissioned by Bishop Charles Este in 1743. Castle built the Palace with its front overlooking the town wall

which he had reduced in height so that it formed part of the palace's terraced garden. Today Richard Castle is celebrated as one of Ireland's greatest architects having designed most of the great houses of Ireland including the seat of the Irish parliament, Leinster House in Dublin. Bishops Palace functioned as the residence of the Anglican bishops of Waterford from 1743 to 1919, becoming then the boarding school of the Bishop Foy School until 1967, when it was acquired by Waterford City Council for offices until 2010.

The Bishop's Palace was magnificently conserved in 2010/11 and opened as a museum in June 2011, displaying the

treasures of Georgian and Victorian Waterford. The museum reveals the story of Waterford from 1700 to the 1970's. Amongst the many items of national and international significance displayed at the museum is the only surviving Bonaparte 'mourning cross', which was one of 12 produced upon Napoleon Bonaparte's death in 1821. The museum also holds the Penrose decanter, the oldest surviving piece of Waterford Crystal, which dates to 1789. An entire floor of the building is dedicated to historic stories specific to Waterford such as Ballybricken's pig markets, Waterford's Home Rule story, the First World War in Waterford, the War of



Tunic belonging to Chaplain Edward Dowling.



18-pounder shells from the local munitions factory.

Independence in Waterford, childhood and household living in Waterford. Rosemary Ryan took us around this exhibition. Like the rest of the museum it reveals treasure after treasure. As Rosemary explained Waterford Treasures are greatly appreciative of people's generosity in giving their memorabilia and artefacts for public display.

Waterford is known as the heart of the Irish Home Rule movement. The exhibition is full of artefacts, letters, and photographs from John Redmond, George Stuart Parnell, and Michael Davitt. A great story proudly told by local people, is that of 1906 Olympic Long Jump winner, Peter O'Connor. While accepting his medal, this Waterford solicitor ran an Irish flag up the flag pole. So, strong were the nationalist feelings in Waterford, that when King Edward VII visited Waterford in early May 1904, 13 councillors abstained from the council address. The Redmonds were very much renowned in Waterford. In 1902, John Redmond received the freedom of Waterford. On display is his Freedom Box, which contains the certificates awarded to him. A film reel shows Willie Redmond addressing crowds in his Captain's uniform.

During early twentieth century Waterford people struggled over Home Rule, nationalism and republicanism. As Waterford sons fought in the trenches, worked in the munitions factory in Bilberry or took First Aid courses, others planned for rebellion.

As Rosemary, had explained to us,

Waterford was the heart of Home Rule. With the outbreak of World War I the Irish Volunteers split in September 1914. The majority sided with John Redmond's call to support the war. They formed the National Volunteers. As many these volunteers went off to fight in World War I, the organisation at home weakened and faded away. Waterford Treasures have on their wall two images, from the Poole collection, of local National Volunteers. The detail is fantastic. More than likely the images were taken shortly after the split. Several of the men are wearing elements of British Army uniforms and rank markings, with elements of Volunteer uniforms. Clearly the men had previous service with the British Army. Alongside these images in a cabinet are two rifles, a Martini Enfield carbine and a Lee Metford. Both have National Volunteers marked on them. Truly a remarkable insight into a much forgotten organisation.

The struggle for independence also gripped Waterford. The county's republican lineage dates to Thomas Francis Meagher, who brought the tri-colour to Ireland in 1848. The 1916 leader, Richard 'Dick' Mulcahy, was born in Manor Street, Waterford in 1886.

Another story is that of Rosamond Jacob. She was a real chronicler of the time. It was in her late teens that Jacob became more politically active. In 1906, both she and her brother Tom, were founding members of Waterford's Sinn Féin club and canvassed for the first Sinn Féin candidate to run for Waterford Corporation. Today Rosamond's

161 diaries are in the National Library.

James Upton is another famous nationalist. He was a famous journalist and helped set up Sinn Féin in Waterford. During the first two decades of the twentieth-century there were over twenty newspapers concerned with national and social issues. One of these was *Honesty*, and it was edited by Upton, using the nom-de-plume, 'Gilbert Galbraith'. First published in October 1915, it lasted until April 1916. *Honesty* was noted for its fierce criticism of the British government, anti-war and anti-Redmond. It also advocated the use of arms against British rule. During Easter Week, 1916, Upton printed the rebel paper, *War News*. In the confusion after the Rising Upton slipped out of Dublin and escaped to Kilkenny. He went on to work for the *Kilkenny Journal*.

During the 1916 Rising, Waterford was meant to rise. Plans were put in place. Local Irish Volunteer commander Seán Mathews was meant to take the General Post Office. Due to the contradicting orders the volunteers assembled and then went home.

Names such as John Condon, are famous for being the youngest soldier killed during World War I. While Field Marshal Frederick Sleight Roberts, 1st Earl Roberts, VC, was the first Colonel of the Irish Guards. Other stories such as Sergeant John Harris killed on the Western Front and Corporal William Elliott Herten are just as important to tell.

The war claimed at least 1,100 from



As some took Redmond's view, others from Waterford looked to rebellion.

Waterford. Some 50 letters sent home from Private Charlie Richards, Machine Gun Corps, and a letter from his cousin Joe Richards, give a first-hand account of what life was like for these Waterford men on the frontline. Others like Patrick Kennedy, Royal Navy, fought at the battle of Jutland. He produced a sailor's wooly. This needlework was quite common at the time. It is in pristine condition.

The war came to Waterford. The sad story of the six Collins brothers is also told. Four were killed and one badly wounded. The sixth was sent home on compassionate grounds. Medals are on display from Steven and Patrick. Patrick was killed late in the war on March 29th, 1918, while serving with the 173rd Tunnelling Company, Royal Engineers.

The SS Formby was sunk on December 15th, 1917, along with her sister ship the SS Coningbeg on the December 17th, 1917, by the same German U-Boat, U-62, captained by Ernst Hashegen. Both were trading between Liverpool and Waterford with general cargo. The attacks claimed the lives of 83 crew and passengers. Most of whom were from Waterford.

The exhibition has many unique artefacts and incredible photographs. Several stood out. A Royal Red Cross Medal awarded to Grace Boshell, who had trained as a nurse in Waterford City and County Infirmary stands out. Grace served in World War I. The Royal Red Cross award was introduced by Royal Warrant by Queen Victoria on April 27th, 1883. The

decoration was awarded to army nurses for exceptional services, devotion to duty and professional competence in British military nursing.

A photograph depicting Waterford women undergoing First Aid training in the Model School (St. Declan's) gives remarkable detail. They women are wearing a nursing uniform but we could not tell what organisation they were part of.

Transitioning several decades is the story of Jim Heylin. On display are five service medals, 1914-1945. Jim's medals include the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal, 1917-1921 Service Medal (War of Independence) with Comhrac bar and ribbon, and the Emergency Service Medal. Following demobilization from the British Army in 1919 Jim Heylin returned to Waterford and joined the IRA and remained on full-time active service until 1923. He acted as armed bodyguard to Dr. Vincent White, until March 1920. He took part in all the military engagements in Waterford including the Pickardstown ambush at Tramore. He had been trained as a signaller in the British Army and was appointed Waterford Brigade signals officer. He fought on the anti-Treaty side in the Civil War and took part in the siege of Waterford.

This remarkable story is not just a personal one. It is the story of Waterford and Ireland. Men fought in World War I, some for Home Rule and others for duty, they came home to an Ireland struggling for independence. Two decades later many



The five service medals of Jim Heylin, dating from 1914-1945.

of these veterans signed up again to defend Ireland from foreign aggression.

As the war clouds of World War I and the struggle for independence diminished, Ireland emerged independent. It was a Waterford man who would become one of Ireland's founding fathers. John Hearne was a lawyer and diplomat. As the Irish Representative to North America in the late 1930's, he is credited to be the first Irish official to present shamrocks to the President of the United States. He is also the architect of the 1937 Constitution.

There are many stories in Bishops Palace. Each are an article all to themselves. Keep an eye out in future issues for more from Waterford Treasures.

Bishops Palace

Enjoy a relaxing cup of coffee located in the Map Room of the Bishop's Palace. Light lunches and a wide array of delicious cakes are also available.

Open daily year-round

One minute walk from Bolton Street Car Park, Medieval Museum, Christ Church Cathedral and House of Waterford Crystal.

Guided tours in historic character and period costume: 45 minutes

The Mall

Waterford

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Republic of Ireland

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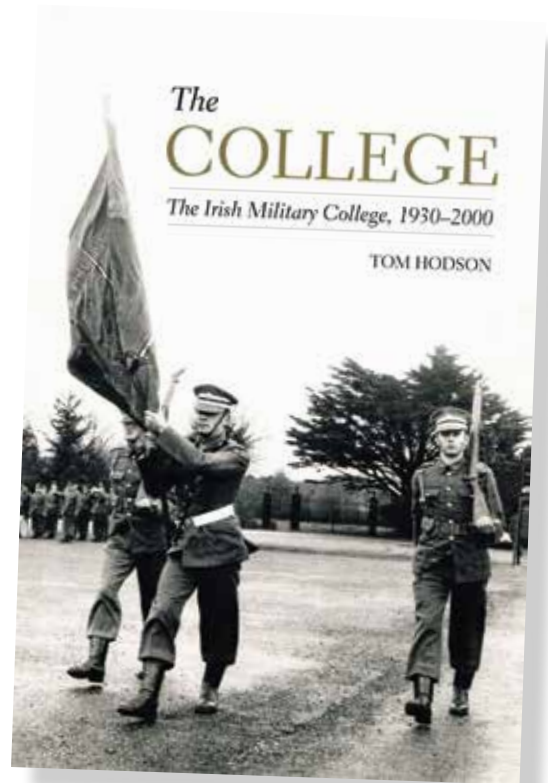
Web: www.waterfordtreasures.com

The Irish Military College, 1930 – 2000

By Tom Hodson
Paperback: €20.00

Since its establishment in 1930 the Irish Military College has had a vital influence on not only the Defence Forces but on the nation. It has formed all of the nation's commissioned officers, many of whom have achieved distinction both within and outside of the Defence Forces. The story of this relatively unknown national institution is intriguing as it has attempted to fulfil the roles laid down for it in 1923 in training and instructing officers and officer candidates.

In this book, Colonel Tom Hodson, a former instructor in the Military College and a graduate of École de Guerre, Paris, charts its history.



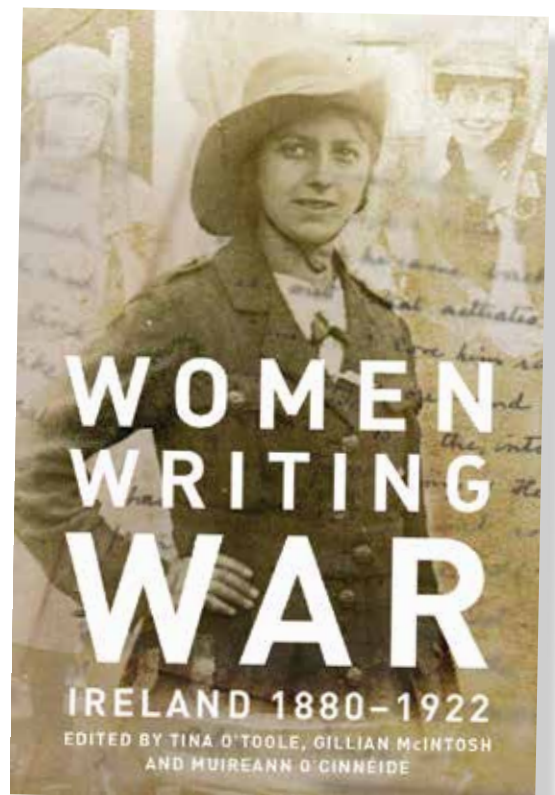
Women Writing War

Ireland 1880-1922

Edited by Tina O'Toole, Gillian McIntosh & Muireann O'Cinnéide

Hardback: €30

We are already entering the second part of the Decade of Centenaries which commemorates conflicts from the First World War to Ireland's War of Independence, and is replete with the stories and legacies of those involved. This year the leaders of 1916 – Pearse, MacDiarmada, Connolly, etc. – and other protagonists including Roger Casement have been centre stage in a lavish programme of events. The important role of women in the events of 1916 has also been brought into the light. That said, the significance and extent of women's participation in, and experience of, the unsettled 1880-1922 period are not fully reflected in Ireland's commemorative programme. The authors of *Women Writing War* do much to extend the spotlight onto the critical contribution of women during the turbulent era of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in the process bringing many forgotten voices to the forefront of this Decade of Centenaries. About the book: Women's literary expressions of war have long been neglected or, at times, simply forgotten in Irish scholarship. In *Women Writing War: Ireland 1880-1922* many of these forgotten women are revealed through their writings as culturally active and deeply invested in the political and military struggles of these volatile times. From the Land Wars to the Boer Wars, from the First World War to the Easter Rising, the War of Independence and the Civil War, the fascinating women considered in this volume grapple with the experiential representation of conflicts.



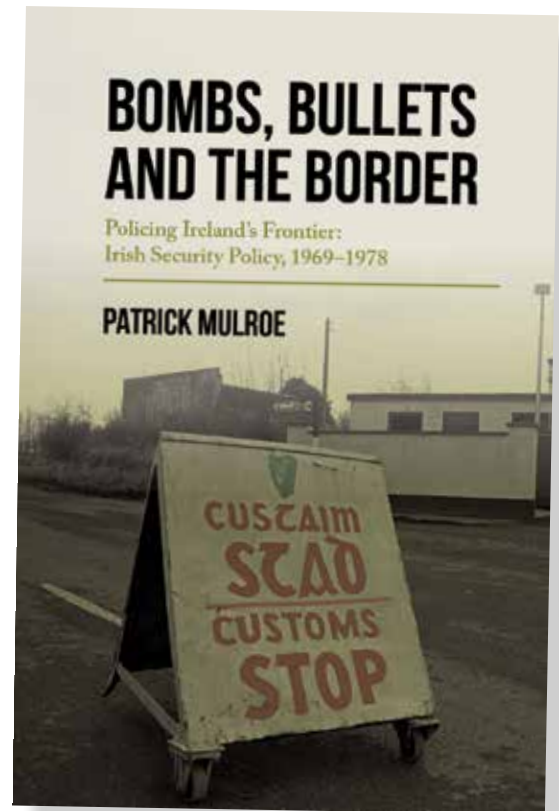
Bombs, Bullets and the Border Policing Ireland's Frontier: Irish Security Policy, 1969–78

By Paddy Mulroe

Paperback: €24.99

Bombs, Bullets and the Border examines Irish Government Security Policy and the role played by the Gardaí and Irish Army along the Northern Irish border during some of the worst years of the Troubles. Mulroe knits together an impressive range of sources to delve into the murky world occupied by paramilitaries and those policing the border. Meticulously examined are the ways in which security forces under Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael governments secretly cooperated with the British Army and the RUC, exacerbating tensions with republican groups in the border counties. Mulroe also reveals the devastating consequences of this exclusive focus, which meant loyalist attacks did not receive the necessary and expected priority.

The findings of the Smithwick Tribunal and the upheaval of Brexit have kept the issue of Irish border security within the public eye, but without a complete awareness of its consequences. *Bombs, Bullets and the Border* is vital reading in understanding what a secure border entails, and how it affects the lives of those living within its hinterland.

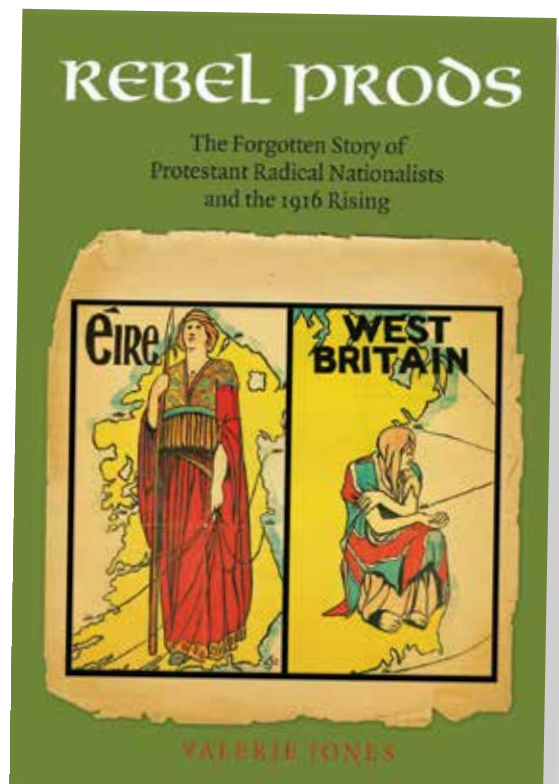


Rebel Prods – The Forgotten Story of Protestant Radical Nationalists and the 1916 Rising

By Valerie Jones

Paperback: €25.00

What contribution did Protestant radical nationalists make to the 1916 Rising? Who were the individual Protestants who took part? Why have they largely been forgotten? This book provides the first overall study of the role of Protestant radical nationalists in planning, and participating in, the Easter rebellion and reveals that a far larger number were involved than previously known. Rejecting the unionism of their communities, Protestant nationalists were radicalised in similar ways to their Catholic counterparts before 1916, through kinship and friendship networks and the Gaelic League, and held important roles in the IRB, the Irish Citizen Army and Cumann na mBan. The revolutionary generation of 1916 spanned the deep religious divisions in the Ireland of the time – while still a predominantly Catholic uprising, the 1916 rebellion was more religiously diverse than its later historical image suggests. Based upon a range of detailed sources, this study reveals the significant collective contribution of Irish radical Protestants to the Rising and their fate in the new Irish Free State.



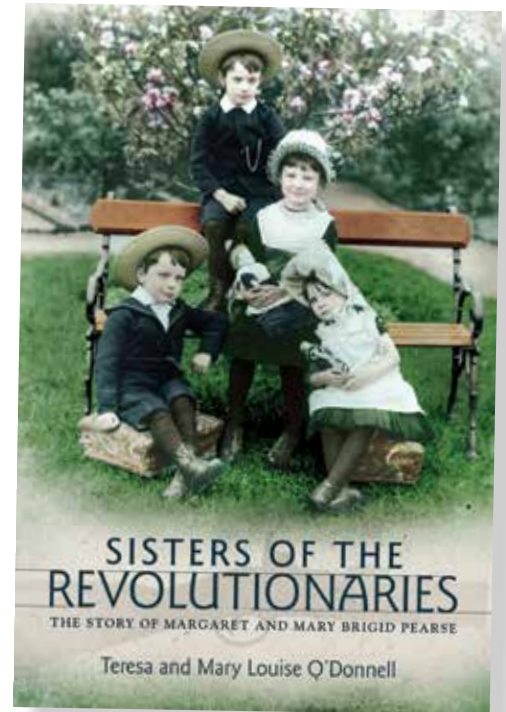
Sisters of the Revolutionaries The Story of Margaret and Mary Brigid Pearse

By Teresa and Mary Louise O'Donnell
Paperback: PB PRICE: €14.99

Sisters of the Revolutionaries focuses on the lives of Margaret and Mary Brigid Pearse, whose brothers, Patrick and Willie, were executed for their role in the Easter Rising and have been commemorated as martyrs ever since. Comparatively little is known about the two sisters, despite their considerable talents and their efforts to uphold the image of their brothers' legacies.

Margaret was an Irish language activist, politician and educator, working with Patrick in founding St Enda's School in Dublin and taking it into her own hands following his execution. Mary Brigid was a musician and author of short stories and children's fiction. The sisters' successes were divergent, however, and their deep affection for their brothers never extended towards each other.

Teresa and Mary Louise O'Donnell provide a fascinating insight into the lives of Margaret and Mary Brigid, illuminating the many joys of their upbringing, their personal trials following the Rising, and the poignant disintegration of their own relationship later in life. This book reveals the previously unknown importance of the Pearse sisters' contributions and the formidability of their characters.



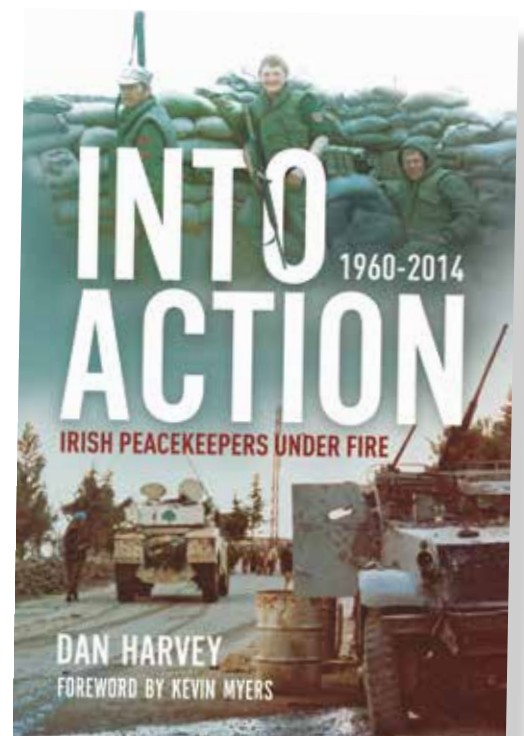
Into Action Irish

Peacekeepers Under Fire, 1960-2014
By Dan Harvey
Paperback: €18.99

Into Action is the story of the Irish Defence Forces' role as international peacekeepers since 1960. Posted to uphold the transition towards peace in overseas conflicts, they have occasionally been forced to fight back against aggressive opposition. Dan Harvey's fascinating and complete history follows the major military incidents in the peacekeepers' sixty-year campaign, from Niemba, the Siege at Jadotville and Élizabeville in the Congo to At-Tiri in Lebanon and Durbol in Syria. This is to name but a few of the military engagements that involved supreme bravery from the Irish Defence Forces and, at times, resulted in terrible tragedy.

Dan Harvey's detailed account of these military operations reveal the defence forces' effective responses to crisis and conflict: how they stood firm during ethnically-motivated rioting in Gračanica or intervened in a clash between Chadian government forces and rebel attackers. In detailing combat, there is also attention to disaster, including how the Irish nation was halted into mourning in November 1960 by news of the nine soldiers killed near Niemba in the Congo.

These are the deeds and tragedies that have come to define Ireland's role in international peacekeeping. *Into Action* reveals the true story of this role and the immense courage that has underlined the defence forces' operations from the beginning of their involvement.



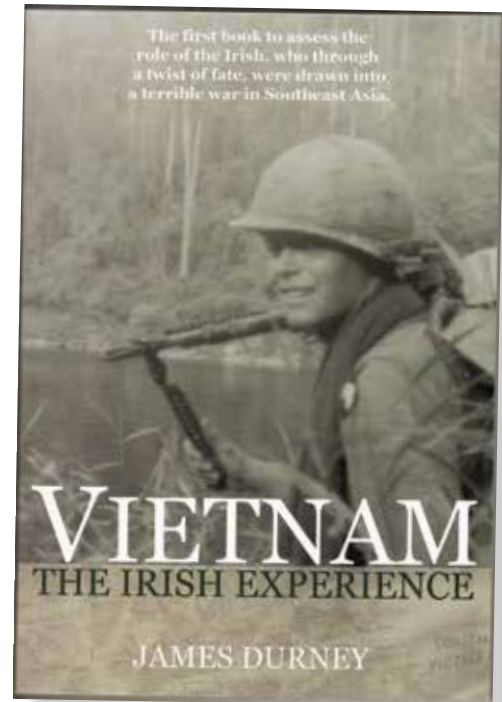
Vietnam: The Irish Experience

By James Durney

Available in paperback via amazon: £13.99

On March 8th, 1965, the U.S. Marines waded ashore near Da Nang in South Vietnam, to guard the nearby airfield from attacks by the Viet Cong. The Marines, and most Americans assumed the situation would be resolved in a few months, never realising that it would be ten years and 58,000 deaths later before the last Americans left the war-torn country.

With that first group of U.S. Marines was nineteen-year-old, Connemara-born Pat Nee. Irishmen Mike Kelly, Ed Somers and Dan Danaher arrived weeks later as the Americans and their Australian allies committed more troops to stem the communist tide, and while Mike Cahill was running the blockade into North Vietnam that summer hundreds more of his countrymen were arriving in South Vietnam with the American Armed Forces. For some it would be a fatal journey. In nearly a decade of some of the most savage battles of the twentieth century the conflict in Southeast Asia would claim the lives of twenty-eight Irishmen and Women.



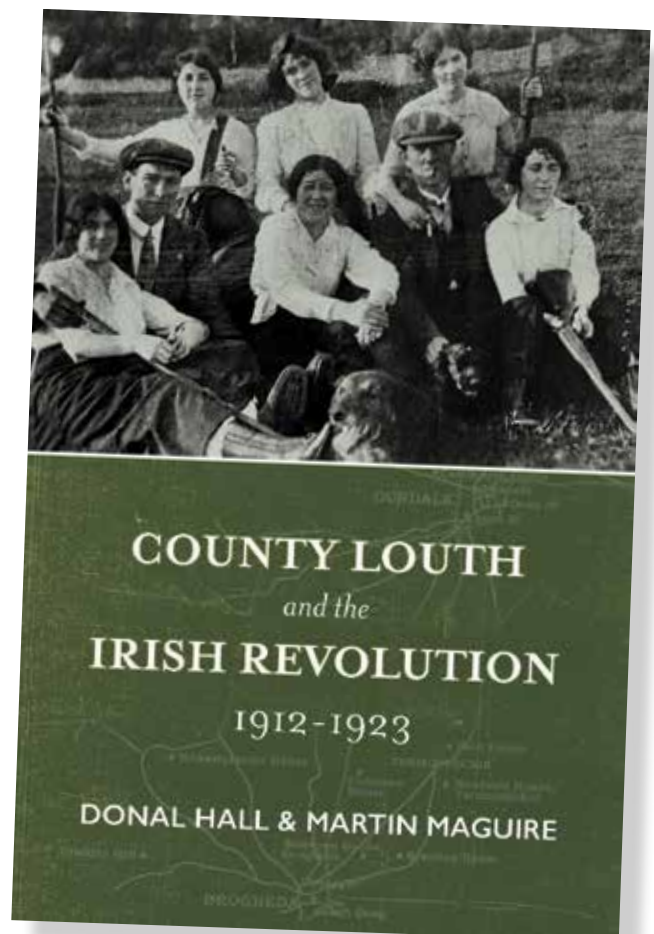
County Louth and the Irish Revolution, 1912-1923

By Martin Maguire & Donal Hall

Paperback: €19.99

County Louth and the Irish Revolution, 1912-1923 is a compelling history of the fierce military action and challenging experience of daily life in the 'wee county' during the revolutionary period. Daily life in County Louth was changed irreparably by outbreaks of violence and ever-mounting animosity towards the British presence in Ireland. The expert contributors to this first-ever local history of the county during this period bring to light a wealth of fascinating stories that will appeal to a general public with an enduring interest in the upheaval of everyday life. Critically, these stories reveal new findings about the early military skirmishes in the local area by towering republican figures, Seán MacEntee and Frank Aiken, how the Civil War struck Drogheda and Dundalk with a conflagration unlike anything previously witnessed, and new research is revealed into the controversial sectarian massacre at Altnaveigh. The economic, political and cultural experience during these years is also fully discussed, providing stark evaluations of social classes, gender, church communities, traditions, and the intrepid activities of Cumann na mBan and the IRA.

County Louth and the Irish Revolution documents every facet of these fervent times, uncovering the truly remarkable in all that they had to offer.



The Ju88 G-6c at Gormanston airbase being inspected by Irish Air Corps personnel.



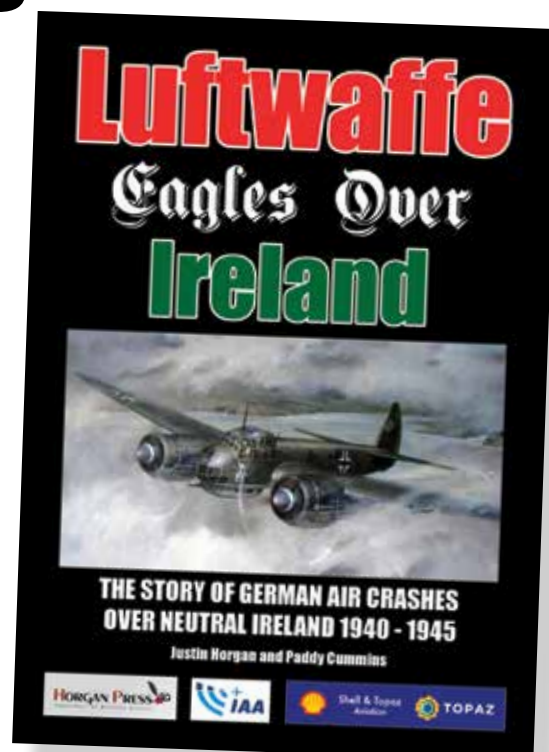
Luftwaffe Eagles Over Ireland

By Justin Horgan and Paddy Cummins

Review by Brigadier General Paul Fry, General Officer
Commanding Irish Air Corps

From the outset, it is apparent that the authors of this book have worked hard over a long time to compile a quality product and the proof is there for any reader to appreciate. The late Paddy Cummins would be proud to have his name associated with it and Justin Horgan has rendered to Paddy's family a fine and enduring tribute to his memory and their friendship.

Justin and Paddy clearly painstakingly trawled through every Irish, German and British archive available looking for material on air operations over and around Ireland during the course of World War Two. This rich volume containing meticulous detail about the missions, crews involved and the various circumstances that contrived to arrange for their arrival on the shores of Ireland during 'The Emergency'. The entire book is laced with contemporary photographs, some obtained from the crews themselves many years



The Ju88 on Tamgmere airfield, West Sussex. Below left: RAF markings being applied to the Ju88 before leaving Gormanston.



Ju88 crew with Irish Army officers in Gormanston, May 6th, 1945.



Ju88 and crew after landing in Ireland.



l-r: Uffz. Horst Schmidt, Irish soldier, Ofw Herbert Gieseke and Gofr. Bernard Kruschyne in Gormanston, May 1945.

after the war, some even dedicated to one or other of the authors.

Of particular interest to many will be the story of the Ju88 which flew in from Denmark in the dying days of the war, landing at Gormanston. A top-of-the-range night fighter, it was duly collected by the famous Commander Eric 'Winkle' Brown Royal Navy Air Service, and flown to England for analysis. The only surviving memory of this event in Gormanston is a black and white picture in the Officers Mess, reproduced in the book on page 283.

I found the chapter concerning the German War Cemetery in Glencree very interesting and moving; it's an illustration of

how two nations combined to commemorate with dignity the German dead of both World War's One and Two in a central and fitting context in the Wicklow Mountains, beside the modern-day Reconciliation Centre.

This is a fascinating and enthralling production with a great range of photographs and extracted contemporary notes, records and logs. It tells in a very readable fashion the human stories behind the aircraft and the missions of the various Luftwaffe crashes in the State during The Emergency years and is recommended as a quality addition to any aviation reader's book collection.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Please contact us if you would like your event added to our calendar page: info@irelandsmilitarystory.ie

Calendar of events

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
March 2nd, 19:00	Glasnevin Trust Lecture: Kate O'Malley 'Women of the Irish Revolution and India: Maud Gonne, Charlotte Despard, Mollie Woods, and the struggle for Indian independence in the 1930's'.	Glasnevin Cemetery Museum Milestone Gallery, Glasnevin Cemetery, Finglas Rd., Glasnevin, Dublin 11.
March 2nd, 19:30	Lecture: Phillip Lecane 'Leinster's Sister - The Sinking of RMS Connaught'.	Maritime Museum of Ireland, Dún Laoghaire, Dublin.
March 5th, 15:00	National Museum Public Tour: Women of 1916.	National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks, Benburb St., Dublin 7.
March 10th, 18:30	Western Front Association Lecture: Ian Montgomery 'The Development of Armoured Warfare in the Great War'.	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), 2 Titanic Boulevard, Belfast, Co. Antrim.
March 10th, 20:00	Military History Society of Ireland lecture: Dr. Bernard Kelly 'Belligerent Internment in Ireland during the Second World War'.	Griffith College, South Circular Road, Dublin 8.
March 19th, 15:00	National Museum - Hands on History. A chance to explore some of the artefacts from the Museum's collection of objects for handling with Museum educators.	National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks, Benburb St., Dublin 7.
March 19th, 15:00	National Museum - Treasures of the National Museum. Take a tour of the iconic treasures in the National Museum, including the 'Tara' Brooch and the Ardagh Chalice.	National Museum of Ireland, Kildare Street, Dublin 2.
March 23rd, 09:00	Discussion: The Community Relations Council (NI): 'Education, Outreach and Creativity.	Diverse City Partnership, 8-14 Bishop Street, Derry-Londonderry.
March 26th, 15:00	National Museum Public Tour: Decade of Conflict, exploring the turbulent decade from 1913 - 1923 examining the ordinary Irishmen and women involved in World War I, the 1916 Rising, War of Independence and Civil War.	National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks, Benburb St., Dublin 7.
March 28th, 19:00	RAF Association (ROI) Annual General Meeting.	National Yacht Club, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin.
April 7th, 20:00	Military History Society of Ireland Lecture: Mr. Tom Burke 'From Malahide to Messines: Letters from Flanders of an Irish Soldier to his Mother'.	Griffith College, South Circular Road, Dublin 8.
April 8th, 14:00	Western Front Association Lecture: Mr. Thomas Murphy 'The Forgotten Soldiers: The story of Prisoners of War In World War One'.	Lecture Theatre, National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks, Benburb St., Dublin 7.
April 16th, 12:00	Department of An Taoiseach Ceremony: State 1916 Commemoration.	General Post Office, Dublin 1.
April 22nd/23rd,	BOACC Ashbourne Living History Festival.	Donaghmore, Ashbourne GAA Club, Ashbourne, Co. Meath.
April 23rd, 10:00	Mayo Peace Park Educational Open Day.	Mayo Peace Park, Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
April 23rd, 12:00	Combined Irish Regiments Association's quarterly Meeting.	Civil Service Club, Whitehall, London.
April 29th, 10:00	International Militaria Collectors Fair.	The West County Hotel, Old Lucan Road, Chapelizod, Dublin 20.
April 29th/30th	Listowel Military Tattoo.	Listowel, Co. Kerry.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 28th/30th	In Humbert's Footsteps.	Kilcummin, Co. Mayo.
May 3rd, 10:00	Department of Defence: Annual Arbour Hill Commemorative Mass and Wreath Laying Ceremony.	Arbour Hill Cemetery, Dublin 7.
May 4th, 14:30	UCD Centre for War Studies Lecture: Professor Guoqi Xu (University of Hong Kong) 'Asia and the Great War'.	School of History, Room K114, UCD, Stillorgan Rd., Belfield, Dublin 4.
May 11th, 18:30	Western Front Association Lecture: Mr. Gerard O'Meara 'Lorrha (Tipperary) People in the Great War'.	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), 2 Titanic Boulevard, Belfast, Co. Antrim.
May 13th, 12:00	Royal Munster Fusiliers Association Annual General Meeting.	Hibernian Hotel, Mallow, Co. Cork.
May 13th, 12:00	London Irish Rifles Association's Annual General Meeting.	Connaught House, London.
May 13th/14th, 10:00	Military Vehicle & Re -Enactment Show.	Irish Military War Museum, Starinagh, Collon, Co. Meath.
May 17th, 19:00	Little Museum Dublin Lecture: Mr. Kevin Myers 'Churchill, Hitler and Ireland's Emergency'.	Little Museum of Dublin, 15 Stephens Green, Dublin 2.
May 20th, 14:00	Western Front Association Lecture: Mr. Bill Fulton 'Betty Stevenson YMCA and Women in the Great War'.	Lecture Theatre, National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks, Benburb St., Dublin 7.
May 23rd, 12:00	Military Heritage of Ireland Trust: Directors' Meeting, Arbour Hill, Dublin 7. Followed by Annual General at 14:30.	Lecture Theatre, National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks, Benburb St., Dublin 7.
May 27th, 10:00	Mayo Peace Park: International Choral Day.	Mayo Peace Park, Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
May 30th	Royal British Legion: Mon. John Coghlan Vicar General Memorial.	Castle Pollard, Co. Westmeath.
June 3rd/4th, 10:00	Wexford Military Show 2017.	Wexford Race Course, Wexford.
June 6th, 12:00	Mayo Peace Park: Gathering and Wreath Laying Ceremony, commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Messine Ridge.	Mayo Peace Park, Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
June 7th, 11:00	Glasnevin Cemetery Trust: Commemoration Remembering the 36th (Ulster) and 16th (Irish) Divisions at the Battle of Messines.	Glasnevin Cemetery, Finglas Rd., Glasnevin, Dublin 11.
June 8th, 18:30	Western Front Association Lecture: Mr. Trevor Adams 'One Family, Four Soldiers, Three Armies'.	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), 2 Titanic Boulevard, Belfast, Co. Antrim.
June 10th, 10:00	International Militaria and Collectors Fair.	The Old School, Gorey, Co. Wexford.
June 10th/11th, 10:00	Irish Military Seminar.	Riverbank Arts Centre, Main Street, Newbridge, Co. Kildare.
June 11th, 15:00	Royal British Legion: Centenary Commemoration Service, marking the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Messines Ridge.	Saint Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral, Armagh.
June 12th, 11:00	Combined Irish Regiments Association's Annual Parade, Commemorative Service & Wreath Laying Ceremony.	The Cenotaph, Whitehall, London.
June 24th/25th, 10:00	Irish Military Vehicle Group: Military Vehicle & Re-enactment Show.	Nass Racecourse, Nass, Co. Kildare.

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